

OUT OF DUE TIME

— *A NOVEL* —

By Mrs. Wilfrid Ward

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War

Out of Due Time

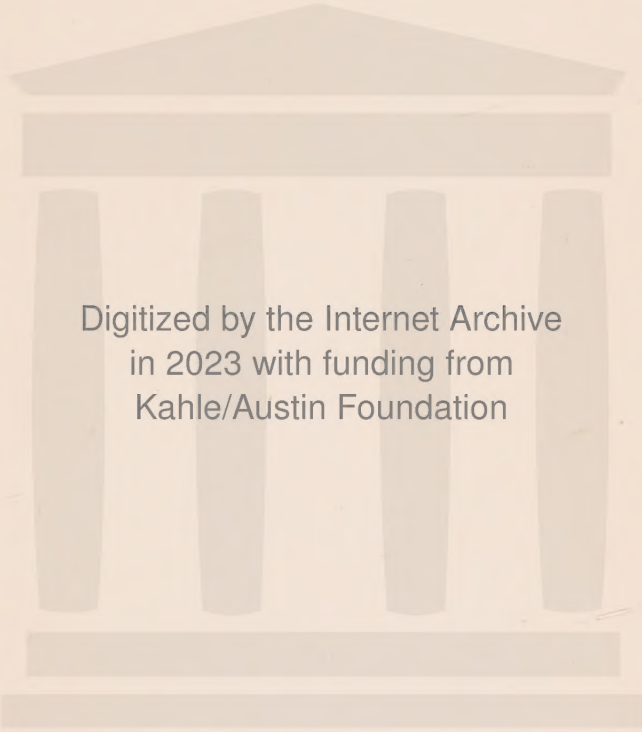
Mrs. Wilfred Ward

St. Patrick's Seminary

Menlo Park, California



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OUT OF DUE TIME

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

ONE POOR SCRUPLE

SPECTATOR.—"We have to thank Mrs. Ward for a singularly interesting and stimulating novel, in which, though the Roman Catholic standpoint of the author is never concealed, anything savouring of aggressiveness or proselytism is scrupulously avoided."

CHURCH TIMES.—"We desire to be understood as judging soberly and as measuring our words when we express our opinion that by this work Mrs. Wilfrid Ward has won for herself a place among the very foremost of living novelists."

PUNCH (BARON DE BOOK-WORMS).—"Any one who, on your Baronite's advice, makes acquaintance with *One Poor Scruple*, will at the same time make acquaintance with a singularly cultivated and winning writer whose first book places her in the first rank of contemporary novelists."

TABLET.—"The delicate theme of Madge's temptation is handled with singular tenderness, strength and insight. . . . Throughout the book an intimate observation goes hand in hand with a playful wit which breaks out delightfully in all manner of unexpected places. . . . In conclusion, we congratulate Mrs. Ward upon a success which shall outlast a season, and which at once gives her an assured place in the foremost ranks of the writers of contemporary fiction."

OUT OF DUE TIME

A NOVEL

BY

MRS. WILFRID WARD

AUTHOR OF "ONE POOR SCRUPLE" AND "THE LIGHT BEHIND"

"La modernità è buona ma l'eterno è migliore"

FOGAZZARO

DISCARD

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

91 AND 93 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

LONDON AND BOMBAY

1906

823.9

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PART I.

I.

I AM the elder of the two daughters of Mary Fairfax, widow of Richard Fairfax, Esq., of Thornly Hall, Sussex. My mother was his second wife, a good deal younger than her husband and almost a contemporary of her stepson, the present owner of Thornly. The children of such a marriage fall between two generations. Our Thornly first cousins are old enough to be our uncles and aunts, and we are only just old enough to avoid being of the same age as our half-nephews and nieces at Thornly Hall. Mary and I used to tell each other that this, and the fact that my mother had been an only child, accounted for the lack of companions of our own age. But there were other reasons, simple enough though unknown to us then, why our lives were somewhat isolated.

My father must have been a delightful man. I regretted his early death profoundly, in an abstract reflective sort of way. I had none of the personal grief of remembrance, and my mother never mentioned him to her children. His death was the whole story of her after-life, and that life was sheathed in a complete silence. I think that much of her vitality and almost all her powers of expansion were buried with him. Her life was lived by routine, and I never remember to have seen her without a tired look on her thin beautiful

features, which were a little negative in expression. She did all her duties very carefully and somewhat emphatically, and I think her dependants were always afraid of her. She took short—very short—walks in the sunshine and she read a novel in the afternoon. There were fortunately a few poor people to visit in the neighbourhood, and our priest was a man of culture, a Conservative with whom she could occasionally talk politics and condemn Mr. Gladstone. Through this dim shaded life we children never lost sight of the presence of the strong, brilliant personality we had never known. Our father's handsome face, its noble features and ethereal eyes looked down upon us from over the drawing-room fireplace; a young old man full of life and the power of enjoying all things pure, true, and of good report. We had another picture of him out hunting, a miniature in court dress, a bust in bronze: of these things we never spoke, but they made their impression. I used to feel wicked when I reflected, as we passed our monotonous days, on how good a time our mother must have had when she first married. What journeys abroad, what company at home! It seemed as if they had known everybody and seen everything! They *did* Italy in driving tours; they went to Greece and Constantinople; they loved Paris in the winter and saw much of its varying worlds. They had heard Lacordaire and De Ravignan in the pulpit of Notre Dame: they had dined with Madame Swetchine and Lord Granville. I must stop, I must stop—all the old rebellious feeling will even now wake up if I don't. And yet I know now that my poor mother could by no means have revived that past for us. But if only she had told us something of her difficulties, and taken us a little more into her confidence, I should never have known those temptations to revolt.

It was on a moss-grown wooden bench with an outlook over a wide view of a domestic English landscape lying in the spring sunshine, farms and cottages, hayricks, little

copses, sluggish ditches, white thorns and stunted yews that I first remember this temptation. Something in the spring stirred me to discontent. My mother had been speaking of the time of the Vatican Council in Rome, to the priest who had stayed to breakfast after saying Mass in our little chapel. She had said enough to fill me with interest and to make me feel how much she had not said that she could have told me. So, in the sunshine, at the age of sixteen, I wrestled with the temptation to revolt against the long quiet years that I saw before me.

I think I did conquer. I prayed to my dear father, who would have understood me so well, I thought, who would surely have taken me away from Crowfield sometimes, who had liked my mother to have pretty frocks—whereas mine were hideous—and who would surely have wished me to see some people of my own age. And there is the pathos of it! My mother never told us of her difficulties simply because they were my father's fault. All through that brilliant young married life of hers, she had struggled in vain, gently and worshipfully, to make her dear husband spend a little less money. She knew all the time, though she would not own it to her stern stepson, that Thornly Hall was being steadily but surely impoverished. No tradesman suffered, no pensioner had less, but each year a couple of thousands were sold out and were hardly missed. Poor father, he died leaving a beautiful will, and a handsome jointure for my mother, but for my half-brother there was a fine old property gone to rack and ruin, and the sound investments, independent of land, that had been the mainstay of the family since the days of the East India Company, had simply ceased to exist. My half-brother John was not exactly a chivalrous character, and he certainly had his trials. There must have been much that was painful, but nothing coarse or angry could be associated

with the broken-hearted widow. She waived her jointure, which would have eaten up the remains of the Thornly income, and left Thornly a month after the funeral. Nor did she so much as inquire who would send her things after her, or who would disentangle her wedding presents from amidst John's possessions. She went to the small dower-house in Surrey, which was damp, and buried in conifers, and had a very indifferent water supply. But within its territory was a little wood, with a moss-grown bench commanding a glorious view, on which I was twelve years afterwards to wrestle with the demon of revolt.

In those days widows lived in retirement, following a great example, and they thought it a duty. Now they think it a duty not to retire. Then such unfortunate little extras as Mary and myself were still looked on, chiefly, as being likely to prove a comfort to the mother in her retirement. Now everything would be arranged with a view to their opening lives. Oh, but as the years went on at Crowfield life was dull, dull, dull! The governess, dear little Miss Mills, was dull, the lessons were dull, the meals were deadly dull. And the life had no outlet! It was the want of hope that made even my limbs ache that spring morning on the mossy bench. I had sat down cheerfully enough to arrange a bunch of primroses with some young green, forgetting the irritation I had felt at the talk at breakfast. The spring smell wrapped all my physical consciousness in pleasure; the birds were crying to each other in busy exultation and serene joy. I leant back and then caught my breath at the sudden glory of the fresh green and the blue sky, in mosaic above me. Surely it was a goodly world, and it was good to be in it.

Yet why is it that, as we get older, spring becomes a more true and resting joy to us? I suppose because in youth we cannot be impersonal—we bring ourselves into everything. After the first glow and joy in the intense vitality of nature

we turn restless, our own vitality needs its outlet, and our minds demand a reason for the hope that is without and within us. At sixteen I had lost my old resource, a day-dream of the frankly unattainable, a fairy tale about myself. I wanted to be able to look forward to a life rich in this world's joys, lighted by the highest of human feelings, and blessed by God. Instead, it seemed as if my life were to be lead-coloured in dulness, with no intensity of feeling, and with a revolt at heart that would leave it unblessed of God. But one bird's song, I remember, was to bring me another note of feeling. I had been some half-hour glowering and angry, curled up on that bench, a dark-eyed, skinny, wriggling *Backfisch* of a girl, when there came a lull amongst the birds, almost a silence in the near wood. It seemed as if the chorus had made way for its *prima donna*, as there rose a high soprano note trilling heavenwards. The sound caught me out of myself for a moment, and as it dropped suddenly, flinging a last gift of a specially Divine note to the earth, I was reminded of the refrain of an old song I used to hear when a child, trilled in a clear, thin, sweet soprano :—

Loyale je serai durant ma vie.

Yes, it was like that, and I kept murmuring the words : "*Loyale je serai durant ma vie*". A clear, a full, a complete sermon, from a preacher whose life was the best of examples. I got up presently, a smiling, though tearful girl, with a new thought and a new hope. Dull or not, flat or not, despised or not, "*Loyale je serai durant ma vie*". I went in and abruptly asked my mother if I could be of any use to her that morning. She was mildly surprised and mildly snubby, and said it would be much better for me to spend my free time out of doors. This a little quenched my glow of enthusiasm, but I went to my neglected garden and treated it with more zeal than discretion. Anyhow, I had got hold of something new. I might put it up on the shelf, but it

was a real gift my bird had given me. It got dusty at times as life went on, but then it came to be washed in tears. There is sunshine about it now and there has been for years. I wonder, but I cannot tell, what storms it may yet have to bear, but I pray that it may pass through them unbroken.

II.

STILL, if that day I had passed through something of a spiritual crisis, if I had got a new treasure, I had also defined a temptation, and thus made it more living. I fancy that my mother saw a good deal more than I thought she did, and I think she was decidedly worried about me three years afterwards, when another spring had brought new blossoms, new birds, and old temptations. The result of her trouble amazed me beyond measure. She told me a little solemnly one morning, after breakfast, that she wanted to speak to me in the drawing-room in an hour's time. Good Heavens! how shy I felt, how intensely embarrassed, as I walked down the length of the narrow sunny drawing-room to her arm-chair where she sat sewing something large and plain. Well, she told me in a voice of mingled severity and kindness—I think she was very shy too—that she had had an invitation for me to stay at Thornly, and that, as I was now nearly nineteen, she thought it would be right for me to go. It seemed that my brother's wife was giving a ball, and it would be a good opportunity for me to begin to go out as a grown-up young lady. I felt frightened, and I longed to ask my mother if she would not take me herself; but I dared not do it, I felt it would be sacrilegious.

I was to go to Thornly in three weeks from then. Those three weeks were spent in constant preparation. My mother, it seemed, had been putting away very small sums of money for several years against the time when I should come out.

And oh, dear me ! it was all spent in getting me clothes for that wretched visit.

Well, I went on the date fixed, but in two days I was back again, to the astonishment of the world at home. I was very miserable, but I held my head high, and before the parlour-maid could leave us, I said in a high staccato voice:—

“ The Duchess and some of the party were coming away to-day, so I thought I might as well come too.” But I felt that they knew the truth, that I had run away from Thornly.

My mother was just like herself outwardly, but I think she was agitated, and my sister Mary’s eyes were intolerably large with curiosity. But it was to her two days later that I told my story.

I can see my little sister so vividly now as she sat on the grass that afternoon, in the flickering shadows of an apple-tree. She had no hat on her golden hair, and her pretty little white and pink face was much the colour of the apple blossoms that occasionally fell on her head and knees, and dropped on her pert little nose. We were both dressed in what we called our “ butcher ” frocks of deep blue cotton. Mary was always tidy, and her white hands, that were now clasped round her knees, were never red and scratched like mine.

“ But, Lizzie, why did you come away so soon ? ” asked Mary suddenly, after we had been quite silent for some minutes.

“ Because they said horrid, wicked untruths about father.”

“ Then of course you could not stay.”

“ I will just tell you all about it,” I said, and my heart was immensely lightened at having got even so far.

Mary put her arm in mine ; the sense of comradeship and oneship between us two was very soothing. There were nearly four years between us, a space of time which had

seemed immense a few years before, but which was dwindling rapidly as she made progress in her teens.

"Do begin at the very beginning, and tell me all about the visit."

"No, I'll tell the horriddest thing first," I said firmly. "It was the last night, after dinner, and everybody was playing cards. As I didn't want to play I slipped behind a screen with a book. Presently Mrs. John and another woman, Lady Hornbrook, sat down on the other side on the sofa and began to talk. After they had talked a little about their intolerable governesses, Mrs. John gave a fat sigh and said: 'I envy them playing cards, but I don't care to play now that I can't afford to do it properly'. 'But, my dear, with your fortune!' 'My fortune goes to keeping up my husband's place,' in a martyr sort of voice. 'It's not John's fault,' Maud went on, 'it was all spent by his father, and then people talk of Mr. Fairfax as if he were a saint! He denied himself nothing, but he built a church and pensioned lots of people long before they ought to have stopped work. He and Mrs. Fairfax enjoyed themselves in every expensive hotel in Europe. Now, besides having to do up the house, and keep the place going, and pay for everything, I'm thought stingy if I don't carry on all the ridiculous, extravagant charities. One man had the impertinence to tell me that if I kept fewer hunters, I could provide for more orphan children.'

"Of course the other woman went on saying it was all too bad and atrocious, but I liked her the best, and she said rather kindly: 'What will become of the shy little sister? Mr. Sutcliffe says that Miss Lizzie Fairfax is very pretty and the cleverest girl here, but then, you know, she had read his article in the *Nineteenth Century*.' 'There won't be a penny for her and her sister,' said Mrs. John, with a sort of vicious satisfaction. 'I suppose I shall have to do something for them.' I nearly screamed out 'Never!' I was

so very angry, but I was too frightened, and just as Lady Hornbrook said, 'That would be rather *too* much, with your own children to think of,' the card-players got up. In a few minutes the Duchess told Maud that she must go to bed, as she was leaving early. Then I slipped out of the room, dashed upstairs and packed like mad—and you know the rest, Mary."

"Of course we can neither of us go there again," said Mary, in her most woman-of-the-world manner; "but I wonder if there's nothing else to be done?"

Poor little Mary, she spoke bravely, but she was terribly troubled. Our own saintly father's memory smirched and spoilt by the odious untrue talk! How hard we tried to think that it was all untrue! But the sting of it was that we could not prove it even to ourselves. It seemed a horrible, intangible cloud darkening the shrine of our home life. I think I was more crushed, Mary more cynical. And to us both it all assumed such gigantic proportions. I felt as if I could never hold up my head again, while Mary became defiant, and had a touch of defiance about her for years. Looking back, after knowing something of the rough give and take of the world's talk, of the bony excrescences protruding out of so many domestic cupboards, my father's financial wrong-doing, and, the way he had wronged John, takes its place as a mysterious blot on what was otherwise a beautiful character. Let those who neglect the poor, and drive hard bargains, and fail to pay their debts, dare to throw a stone at my father, because he did not realise that those harmless little sellings-out, thousand by thousand, were spoiling John's property.

But of course there were other things to say about that visit. My first glimpse of the world was full of matter for endless discussion. We used to start in a sort of rush on our country walks as if we had no time to spare, and then we would discuss all those twenty folk I had met at Thornly.

The wife of a great traveller once said to me in all simplicity, that every time her husband recounted his adventures in the East, he remembered something new; so I think under stress of Mary's questions, I grew to know more of the party as the summer wore on. At last we frankly invented much about them, and made matches between them, and otherwise made them work out the characters we had discerned them to possess.

Then occasionally we saw their names in the papers, and oh, what an excitement that was! Even to this day I can't see the death of one of that party at Thornly announced in *The Times* without a pang.

Then "the man who said you were pretty and clever"—which was Mary's stock description of Mr. Sutcliffe until I got sick of my one compliment—continued to write articles in the *Nineteenth Century*. It was thrilling! We read them, and we read all the books he quoted when we could lay hands on them.

"The man who said you were pretty and clever," said Mary, in a most aggravating voice, "is becoming a liberal education to us both. I only wish he were handsome."

"But he isn't at all; he has rough, big features, not well finished off, and his eyes are amusing but not large, and they are half-hidden by his heavy, shaggy eyebrows."

"But he is tall, isn't he?" said Mary, with a sigh.

"Oh, yes; but he is too broad, and he rolls along like a sailor. I told you that he left the navy because of his elder brother's death."

"So he will be Lord Sutcliffe some day," Mary observed, with satisfaction, "as he is the eldest son." Nothing is so aggravating as the peculiar worldly wisdom of a girl of fifteen, and nothing so transient. It is only one of the endless, and constantly varying, forms of mimicry.

"He is perfectly miserable about his brother's death," I cried hotly.

"I never said he wasn't," said Mary. "I don't mean anything horrid, so you needn't pretend that I do. I only mentioned an obvious fact."

III.

It is not good to be as much alone as we were in those days. In a solitary life anybody may make an impression, almost anybody becomes important, and young people especially are too much at the mercy of books. The monotony of our days went on, almost unbroken, for nearly three years. It was tacitly assumed that I had come out, and that my one party had been a foretaste of gaieties to follow in some vague future. The schoolroom had become more and more of a fiction even for Mary, who was almost eighteen. My mother and my governess let me go my own way in my studies, and I spent whole days in reading. I asked my mother long afterwards why she had let me read one or two books that I should hesitate to give a girl now.

"You were much older for your age than girls are now," she said, and then with her sweet, wan smile she added, "To tell the truth, I thought it would be more dangerous for you not to have them than to have them."

How hard a question it is! I am sure she was right, and I believe I got no harm; yet one would fain postpone for a girl something of the pain of the riddle of this painful earth.

More than two years after my Thornly visit—"we date from the first social war," Mary used to say—our parish priest fell ill, and was sent abroad for six months' change. In his place came a young man, who was very much out of health himself and, as I think now, in rather a queer state of

nerves. He preached very well, we girls thought. Mother did not agree. He read immensely, he wrote for magazines, and he knew my one intellectual acquaintance, Mr. George Sutcliffe. This was a pleasant change after old Mr. Thompson, who had nothing newer in his library than *The Life of Milner* and Lingard's *History*, books which I therefore never appreciated until late in life. Father Colnes belonged to the generation of secular priests who began to be called Father instead of Mr., thus abolishing the old distinction between secular clergy and those belonging to religious orders. I see now that he regarded Mary and myself as being most unkindly buried by my mother. He jumped to the conclusion that she was a *dévôte*, who thought that her daughters could only reach another world safely by seeing nothing of this one. That he was very sensitive could easily be seen from a first glance at the pale, thin features and transparent eyelids and nostrils. His eyes were pale too, and his large mouth was weak. Some conditions of nerves sharpen the perceptions, and Father Colnes knew what people felt towards him almost as acutely as if he had been a dog. He saw that my mother did not like him, and I think, unconsciously, he returned the feeling.

It would be most unfair to Father Colnes to suppose him to have been in any way the cause of the troubled state of nerves I fell into, but his influence was not bracing. It is very delicate work to give wise sympathy to those who suffer negatively. It is much more simple to help those who are in pain, than to help those who simply lack joy. Somehow, after he had been talking with Mary and me, I used to feel stifled; nothing in my daily life was quite interesting.

"But why not finish your essay?" queried Mary one day after he had left us.

"What's the use? Father Colnes evidently thinks all my authorities old-fashioned. Besides, I've had no training."

"Then do go on with the story; I'm sure that's very good."

I was leaning back on a garden chair with my arms hanging listlessly by my side.

"My dear, how can I write stories when I have seen nothing of life? It may interest you, but——" I stopped. I did not want to make Mary unhappy. I could see that she was troubled about me; the pretty little white forehead was puckered in a frown. There was a maternal instinct in this younger sister of mine that might have touched me if I had not been too self-absorbed. It was not that I suffered from my old temptations to rebelliousness—I felt altogether more listless and depressed than rebellious. I had not enough to do, enough to take me out of myself. I had been feeding on shadows and fancies, and I got my punishment. The greatest realities were losing their place in my mind, their outlines were dimmed by the fog.

I remember at this time moments on the old bench in the wood, wild walks on the common, and slow pacing of the garden plot in front of the house, dull with mental pain. A mist had come over my prayers; I lay awake at night, and could not eat, which was for me the most surprising symptom of all. It was soon after Father Thompson came back, and perhaps at his suggestion, that my mother and old Miss Mills, the governess, first spoke of tonics and then of a change. I felt entirely indifferent as long as I was not again to be sent to anything like the party at Thornly.

Then at this moment of need, as at the other moment, my mother received an invitation for me. She instantly decided that I ought to accept it, although it was entirely surprising that I should be asked, and that I should go to stay with complete strangers. It came about in this way: The Comtesse de Pourcelles had been, by her first marriage, the second wife of a friend of my father's, the Comte d'Etranges, whose first wife had been an Englishwoman. He had had a son, Paul, by the first marriage, and a daughter, Marcelle, by the second. The young d'Etranges', half-brother

and sister, had decided to make their home together when Madame d'Etranges had married again. Madame d'Etranges after she became Madame de Pourcelles parted very unwillingly with her daughter, and did all she could to take care of her from a distance. Marcelle d'Etranges, after a couple of years spent in Germany with her brother, came to England, which was Paul's maternal country, with him. Madame de Pourcelles had in vain tried to make some social relations for her daughter in Germany. She and Paul were determined to be independent, and to mix with a world quite unknown to her mother—a world of *savants*, of thinkers, and of students.

Madame de Pourcelles saw some hope of better things when they came to England, and she wrote a crowd of letters to her friends and acquaintances, admirably expressed, to let them know that her daughter Marcelle d'Etranges would be living within reach of many of them. One of the first to whom she applied as a social godmother was my mother.

"How little Madame de Pourcelles knows how useless I am become! She thinks, of course, that I am still at Thornly," said my mother, with a sad smile; but the letter pleased her. It was reminiscent of a happy past. Even the shape of the sentences and the look of the writing was a pleasure. She paraphrased it for me after I had made a vain attempt at reading it for myself.

"Paul d'Etranges has come into a little property in Derbyshire, Peak Hall, '*très ancienne et très romantique*,' Madame de Pourcelles understands it to be. It has been left him by his mother's sister—his mother, you know, was a Miss Lake. Paul and Marcelle d'Etranges are there now, and Madame de Pourcelles is very anxious for you to go and pay them a visit. Knowing the independence of the English character, and particularly of the '*jeune demoiselle*' in England, and her habit of constantly going '*en voyage*' by herself, she does not hesitate to make the request. But, my

dear," here my mother put down the letter, "it does seem a very long way for you to go alone."

That was years ago it must not be forgotten, at least twenty years ago (I'm not in conscience bound to be more exact as to the date). I felt then that such a journey would be a bold measure, and my heart sank. But Miss Mills rose to the situation, and it was agreed that her proposal to take me to London, and see me into a ladies' compartment direct to Glossop, was quite fitting.

"The comfort is," it was Mary who spoke, "both as to your clothes and your not having a maid, that Mademoiselle d'Etranges is new to the country, and will take for granted, knowing who you are, that it is all right according to English ideas."

"She won't if there are really smart people in the house too," I said, ruefully surveying the frocks that had been so costly a part of the visit to Thornly three years before. "Besides, you know, there is something like a *smell*—a smell to the eye—in old smart frocks—a Frenchwoman's instinct would detect it at once."

Mary sighed deeply. "Then you know," I went on, "for the moors it ought to be so very different, tailor-made things, yachting clothes——"

"My dear!" said Mary, "you don't expect to yacht on the moors, do you?"

"No, but there ought to be something very tailor-made and very blue sergey, and that makes me think of yachting."

"But do take consolation from her Frenchness," persisted Mary. "You will probably find her in a sort of Watteau muslin effect, or in a Trianon cotton edged with priceless lace. Those two frocks really are nice and summery, and will do quite nicely with hers."

Mary saw that I was really depressed with the *malaise* of worldly anxiety, and her pride and her tenderness made her anxious to drive it away. "I wouldn't change them," she

said, when Miss Mills came in with a paper pattern of an up-to-date sleeve from a weekly journal of fashion; "they were made by quite a good woman, and there is a sort of idea in them, something about youth and innocence——"

"Oh, do for Heaven's sake stop!" I cried, "and come out into the garden; you're *quite* cracked to-day."

But Mary had to read with Miss Mills, not having finished that process of not being educated, which was considered to be complete in my own case.

I went into the garden with Pascal's *Pensées* determined to rise to a higher level, but I couldn't. I was really not well; the air of the place was soft, and we were buried in fine conifers, great brutes of evergreens that are bad for body and soul. I could not understand a word of Pascal, and I was annoyed with myself for minding so very much about the frocks. Gradually my nervous enemy, a sense of unreality and unbelief, crept out from the dark shadows of the great trees, and got its grip on me again. How could I rise to higher things if I didn't believe? and how could I make myself believe? I understood how to fight a bad temper or many other temptations, but how could I think it a sin to think things were not true if I could know nothing positive about them? And as to loyalty, my old stay-by and strength, how be loyal to what did not exist? The world was painful to me; there seemed a chasm between me and my home, while the warm, heavy air grew denser, and the shadows deepened. All the time I knew that a great part of my troubled state of mind had come, in the first instance, from those frocks. Oh, what to do? what to do?

I walked round the field to the little dark, stuffy church and knelt down; there was only the dim light of the sanctuary lamp. How could one be disloyal even to what was most sacred, if what was most sacred was a delusion? Loyalty, in such a case, would only be a delusion about a delusion.

What haunted me was a nervous suspicion that, if I had really studied modern thought, I should know that science had in fact in these later days exploded the faith in which I had been brought up. I had not any knowledge of the real problems at issue, but my imagination was haunted. Some verse from Matthew Arnold, or a few lines from Clough, mourning delicately for the loss of Christianity, affected me much more than any facts of science, or any gibes or insults from violent foes, could have done.

But I was kneeling in the right place. Presently out of a poor little paralysed imagination came the thought: If it still be true, if my past strength and my past joy are only hidden for a time, what am I losing if I am not loyal? Could I not take the risk of walking onward in the dark? Was it not of the essence of loyalty to be ready to take the risk? At the worst what was it I sacrificed? Only myself and my life.

The readiness to make any sacrifice to duty calmed and braced my nerves. The mists slowly lifted. The dim sense of the reflection of the infinite in my soul deepened. And then was restored, as in a wave of peace, the dependence on Him who loved me better than I loved myself. Pascal believed because he had known Him in Whom he believed. It was to One I knew and loved, not to a set of abstract propositions, that my loyalty was due. I could not realise my past love, without recognising that it still lived within me. To that love, which was the highest thing in myself, I would not, by the grace given to me, be disloyal. My head sank, and the hot tears of joy and relief trickled through my fingers. "*Loyale je serai durant ma vie*".

When I came into supper, I could think with brightness even of the unfashionable gowns.

IV.

AFTER a long hot journey, how delightful was my first drive across the moors to Peak Hall. "It would be about twelve miles," said the cheerful red-faced driver, speaking in soft North-country accents, as he handed me into the dogcart. There had been some moments' delay, as there were no preparations for my luggage, and we had to inquire for a cart to follow with my boxes.

Twelve miles before I need think of being shy or self-conscious, or afraid of my hosts; twelve miles of rough jogging down hills and slow crawling up, each kind of motion carried to an extreme that suggested some personal eccentricity in the pony or the driver. We were soon between glowing purple hills on one side and great grassy ones on the other, very curious and individual in formation, sometimes crowned with huge blocks of rocky stone massed in weird shapes on the summits. Several of these rocks were objects of affectionate pride to the driver, who pointed them out as we got further into the valley. There was one especially striking isolated mass of rocks. "They do call those the 'Coach and Horses' on this side, on the other they calls them 'The Old Woman and her Cakes'." Both names were curiously fitting; the grey coach always seemed to me, when I became familiar with it, to be carrying the phantoms of some evil great men lost out on the moors. It was a mail-coach with four horses and a large boot, all heavily made of eternal rock, and yet evidently moving in a shadowy, ghost-

like movement. After long walks on our way home to the Hall we saw the coach, but if we were outward bound as we sprang up the heather-covered hills, the great grey boulders, curiously rounded and smoothed by the mighty winds and rains that swept over the higher moors, were then intensely and obviously a giant's wife stretching out a plate of cakes to put them in the oven.

Dear old lady, you are still at it, but I don't think I could bear to go and see you now. The phantom coach caught my imagination, but it does not hurt me to think of it. You were more human, and are more mixed up with old thoughts—old recollections.

I think I can recall the first moment when I became really aware of the river; the valley had grown narrower, and the road, taking a sharp turn across a low stone bridge, ran along for a time by the river's side. The water came to meet us tumbling over the stones, brown, hasty, noisy, but wonderfully musical, fed by the endless silver threads that had hurried down the moors as winter melted into spring. Do trees growing beside other rivers bend quite so low, and so persistently keep their branches in the water, like children leaning over a boat's side for the pleasure of the trickle through their fingers? Do other rivers have such clear mossy holes and corners filled with green and gold and brown light, and such deep mysterious pools filled with trout? I have had a river for a friend which spoke to me when men were dumb, which dried tears on the eyes that looked into it, which did not reason with an unsatisfied heart, and made no reproach to want of courage. Its voice has been to me the handmaiden of religion, soothing what was strained in nature, and the gentle companion of sorrow, when the human voice would have been intolerable. My first introduction to this river was simply exhilarating: life flowed out of it, and its waters bubbled with delicious nonsense, as if it were chaffing, in schoolboy fashion, the old grey silence of the hilltops who

loved its impertinence. It did not talk to me that evening, but I seemed to be drinking it in. Meanwhile the sky was flushing a deep rose, and the grass fields on either side were bright green, and the heather—the hills above on both sides were clad in heather now—glowed with its own wealth of colour that grew shadowy under the great stony masses higher up the ridges. The valley closed in upon us, and presently a church nestled among some trees, and we were driving on a narrow, well-kept road between the river and a high old stone wall—I saw then that we had passed through an open gate and were in private grounds of some sort. My shyness had been forgotten in enjoyment, but I breathed one wild wish that I could have this exquisite spot to myself, without disturbing, alarming, human beings to spoil my pleasure. I am afraid it is a wish I have known later in life when approaching a country house.

Peak Hall was the end and ultimate object of the road. Beyond it, bridle and foot paths led up to farmhouses and keepers' lodges, but here the road proper came to an end. The house and garden were raised a good deal above it. The walled garden was divided into three squares, making one long oblong by the river side. The wall, beneath which I drove, rose to an old coping, strong enough for defence, and making sharp right angles with the low walls that cut across the garden in its three divisions. At the far corner an old man in a cocked hat held a sundial on his chest, and at other corners stood great balls of stone; and one or two carved heads crowned the angles. In the garden nearest the house there was a raised stone terrace, and one could sit on the top of the outer wall, and look down on the river. I suppose there are people sitting there now. I wonder what manner of folk they are?

The first garden was herbaceous; the second was in two long kitchen garden beds bordered with flowers; the third was a bowling-green. Under the great elms at the far end

of the bowling-green was a wrought-iron gate, with great stone pillars. Beyond rose the first green slope of the hills to the west, and on this slope was the village church.

I saw all this afterwards. At first I was conscious only of the dark wall, and then that the wall turned sharp at right angles, leaving an open space before the house. It was all on quite a small scale—a little old hall of some quiet country squire, not a county magnate who numbered it among many other possessions. I supposed it was Jacobean; I knew it was beautiful. It was built of grey stone, green with little lichens. There were two large stone gables and several small latticed windows with heavy stone mullions. One great stone over the perfectly plain front door bore the date and initials of the squire who had built it. The front door opened on to a wide flagged terrace bounded by a low wall; then came another narrow terrace below. Two great stone gate-posts stood on the higher terrace opposite the front door, one of which had sunk so that their elaborate moulding came unevenly to the eye, and the great stone balls that crowned them were of unequal height. From this gate spread out in half-circles some very shallow steps, breaking into the lower terrace and going down to the road. Across the road was a group of tall, red-trunked Scotch firs, and immediately below you heard the river, and could just see the water when it was full after rain. Beyond the river, closing in the view, there rose abruptly a bold green hill. I tripped up the little well-worn shallow steps, clothed in moss and tiny wild strawberry plants which had pushed their way between the chinks. As I stood facing the front door I had the garden on my right, and could see over the low wall that divided it from the terrace on which I stood, a bright vision of flowers, then the elm trees, the church tower, and, rising high above all, the purple moors crowned by the sunset.

I turned to the driver to see what he expected me to do,

as there was nobody in sight. I understood that his whip which he waved towards me, indicated a bell that hung outside the door under a tiny pent-house. After that he drove on into what I judged to be a paved stable-yard from the clattering noise that followed. I tried the stiff, rusty chain of the bell, but with no result. I put down my bag—it was really Mary's, lent to me because it was new and smart—and I tried again with both hands. There was again no result. A chink of the front door was open. I pushed it timidly, and got a glimpse of a large dark room, old oak benches and some distorted human figures in grey-green tapestry on the walls. I dared not go in, so I went back to the bell. To ring must be the only right and conventional method of effecting an entrance. I was getting red with my exertions when a shrill voice behind me said, "The bell has not been rung since Adam or Eve put it there". I turned round and saw before me a tallish, stoutish young woman, of about my own age or a couple of years older. I had a general impression of a dark complexion, dark eyes, and black hair rising high above the forehead; on her head hung awry a pink cotton bonnet with long strings, and she wore a loose shapeless yet shapely yellow cotton blouse. Blouses were not worn then, and it looked to me more like a housemaid's morning cotton than it would now. She had a short stuff brown petticoat, and the whole of her attire was gathered and kept together in almost classic simplicity by a leather belt. Her feet were bare. She wore large gauntlet gloves, and she carried a pail of milk.

"Are you Mademoiselle d'Etranges?" I stammered stupidly.

"Yes," she said curtly, and her black eyes looked hostile. "You are of course Miss Fairfax."

Somehow the "of course" conveyed to me that the fact was a most uninteresting one.

"You will be tired," she said, leading me into the low,

dark, rambling hall, and then she stopped, put down the pail, and shrieked, "Jacques, Jacques!" A small, olive complexioned, nondescript man came from behind the tapestry in a far dim corner. "This is all the milk the stupid cows have given me, take it and boil it *tout de suite*, then take up Miss Fairfax's boxes to the yellow room—I don't know why yellow," she went on, turning to me, "it is a hideous magenta—*affreuse!*" she spoke very stiffly, and I felt horribly embarrassed. Then she moved on and I followed her. She lifted a heavy piece of tapestry and held it back for me a moment, and I passed under it murmuring "thank you". I never felt a more glacial manner than hers. We were now in a low, narrow passage. She opened a door, and a flood of rosy light burst into the darkness. At the same moment there was a crash of chords from a piano. The sound was somehow familiar, and most pleasant to me as I followed her into the room. It was also low, and roofed and panelled in old oak, and there were many flowers in it.

"What is the use of staying indoors in such weather?" said Mademoiselle d'Etranges, now in a quite human tone.

"What is the use of milking the cows when somebody else could do it better?" answered a man's deep voice. Mr. George Sutcliffe rose and came from the piano as he spoke. He was as surprised to see me as I was to see him, and I fear that owing to my sense of loneliness I gave him a beaming, too glowing smile of relief. I was certainly not a woman of the world. His very usual, very polite greeting felt a little flat after the warmth of mine.

"So you know her," commented our hostess.

"Yes, we met, but some time ago, isn't it?" said Mr. Sutcliffe.

"And then only for two days," I answered, and to my unutterable disgust I began to blush. Something in Marcelle's black eyes seemed to say, "Dear me, how English!" She lit herself a cigarette, and then looked down at her bare feet.

"I must change them," she said.

"The sooner the better," said Mr. Sutcliffe severely; "but why, since this new fancy, do you go barefoot out-of-doors and wear shoes indoors?"

"Why, because of needles,—cows don't drop needles," retorted Mademoiselle d'Etranges as she left the room. Mr. George Sutcliffe looked at her retreating back with the sun-bonnet hanging over her shoulder and then at me, and smiled and almost winked. "But you are too tired to enjoy any of it yet," he said. "By this time she has probably forgotten all about us, and the main fact is that you must have some tea. Tea is by no means easy to get here. It's of no use ringing any bell, but I will make a try at finding somebody." He disappeared; the result of his researches was the appearance of a large, motherly, delightful North-country woman with a sun-bonnet on her head exactly like that worn by Mademoiselle d'Etranges. This charming person took me up to the yellow room, where everything was magenta, but so faded as to be harmless. Ah, the joy of stretching myself on that old, four-post bedstead, and the relief of shutting my eyes! A quarter of an hour later the man I had seen in the hall looked in with the faintest premonitory knock, bearing a tray of tea in a gigantic silver teapot and a wonderful Sèvres cup and saucer. It proved to be so disgusting a beverage that I could not force myself to drink it, so I emptied the cup into the ivy outside my window. Happily there was a caraffe of gloriously cold water and some essence of orange flower on a side table. After half an hour, in which I realised that I had been tired into a splitting headache, I got up and began to unpack. What on earth should I put on? What would be appropriate to a bare-footed hostess in a sun-bonnet? Just as I had chosen my plainest tea-gown there came a knock at the door, and in answer to my "come in" there appeared a tall dark lady, most beautifully dressed in yellow satin, altogether *en grande tenue*, and until she

spoke I had some difficulty in recognising Mademoiselle d'Etranges.

"Mr. Sutcliffe thinks you won't be able to come down to dinner, is that so?"

"No, not at all. I would rather come down, thank you."

"Don't think of the trouble," she said. "Go to bed if you are tired, and Jacques can bring you your dinner. There are several things to eat—I forget what—but he will know."

There was a more kindly ring in her voice this time. I protested that I would rather come down, which was not strictly true.

"Ah, you have had tea," she said, only half-listening to my remarks. "The English always love tea;" then with a little shriek, "but it is my best Sèvres cup," and snatching it up she hastily left the room. When I got downstairs I heard her scolding Jacques in the dining-room. I made my way to the dusky drawing-room. Mr. Sutcliffe was leaning his broad shoulders against the chimney-piece with his head bent forward to listen to his companion. As I came in a man taller than he, and thin, very thin, rose from a chair, making Mr. Sutcliffe look more thick-set and more muscular by the contrast as they stood together.

"Will you present me?" said a low penetrating voice.

I shook hands with the Comte d'Etranges, meeting for the first time those strange, piercing, cold grey eyes of his. The face was clean-shaven and very thin—I never saw anybody so thin who was not actually ill. Grey and black would be the only colours needed by an artist to paint the Count's portrait. It was only at moments that he showed his full height, as he seldom held himself up properly. I think he was dressed for dinner that evening, but his clothes always seemed to me much the same, and had at least the merit of passing unnoticed.

"You have had a long journey," he said.

I was at once reminded as he spoke of the fact that the

Count's mother had been English, and that he had been to an English school. He was twenty years older than his half-sister at the least, and curiously old at that. I came to see that quite unconsciously he took the part of the aged in the house. He laboured not, neither did he lack anything he needed. As we settled down he realised the place of the aristocracy in our small party. He ruled us, and in return we were grateful, and we gave him of our best. He did not know it himself, and by the time I came to recognise our mutual relations I acquiesced in them heartily. I have read aloud to the Comte d'Etranges until my throat was sore, and I have copied his impossible writing until my eyes were dim, but I only felt how stupid it was of me to have tonsils that would swell and eyes that could not work without pain after midnight with even three candles.

I can't be clear now as to what I thought of him then ; I can't now dissociate his personality from the influence I grew to feel later on. It certainly seemed natural that our hostess apologised to him and not to her guests for making dinner late. It seemed natural, too, that during most of the meal the conversation consisted of George Sutcliffe talking to and for our host, asking his opinion on things as if it were decisive, and presenting his own as if of necessity an inferior article. I felt nervous and tired, but I enjoyed myself all the same. I don't know now what they talked about ; partly, I suppose, because I had not then any clue to much of what they said. I remember that Marcelle hardly listened, and that she had at moments a look of being bored, quite fiercely bored, in her dark eyes. The Count's hands struck me as something unusual ; I think I gave him a decanter and our fingers touched, and in spite of the heat of the room his fingers were very cool, almost cold.

I had an odd little thrill then, and I recall it now. He was always the same, independent of what affected other people ; hot rooms left him cool, and icy weather made him no

colder. I felt as if I had got out of school or out of church when we left the dining-room and found ourselves on the terrace.

"We follow the English custom and leave the men to themselves," Mademoiselle d'Etranges explained. "I find it barbaric, but it suits Paul. I suppose that wine leaves people open to influence."

I shivered slightly at this allusion to the mysterious Count.

"And you know Mr. George Sutcliffe?"

"Only a little," I said quickly. I wanted to do away with the impression of that blush. "I met him at my first party."

"*Tiens!* and you made great friends?"

"No," I said, "it wasn't that; but I was unhappy at my first party and I ran away."

"Ran away," cried Marcelle, "because you were not happy; how amusing! *Comme c'est gentil de dire cela!* and where did you run?"

"Why, I ran home," I said, opening astonished eyes at her.

She laughed heartily, and the unfriendliness I had felt before somehow suddenly vanished. "And Mr. Sutcliffe, did he run too?"

I sat down on a stone seat against the wall and laughed helplessly. "I don't believe that he even knew I ran away."

"Oh, that's dull; you might at least have told him. But then, why did you blush when you met him to-night?"

"Only because I wondered if he knew how I had behaved then." I feared she would detect that I was not speaking the truth, for in reality I could not explain to myself that idiotic blush.

"And you have been a great deal in the world since then?" she asked.

"Oh, no," I said; "I have never been in the world since."

She sat down on the bench beside me and laughed heartily. "How amusing! how nice! I thought you were going to be one of the horrid, smart, stupid, detestable girls"—her voice rose with her adjectives in singularly vituperative effect—"whom *Maman* tries to send here, and who understand nothing and care for nothing and tire Paul. Do you know," she went on, with a delicious child's expression in her face, "that was why I put on my very best gown, and *oh ciel!* I forgot, I am spoiling it on this bench. And you are really quite nice, and my yellow satin wasn't needed!" she added to herself. "It is too late to make it worth while to change, but why spoil it on the mossy stone?"

We got up, she took my arm and we strolled on.

"You see, my mother will bother me with people who don't really want me, and who are of no use to Paul, and I can't stand it; I had enough of the world, *bien assez*, at home. I shall go back to it some day, but not now. We have come to England for a purpose, and we don't want to be bothered."

I felt a little jarred by something in these last remarks. How Marcelle jumped at things! She seemed from this moment to take for granted that I knew nothing of the world she had abandoned, and my poor little vanity did not quite like it. Still there was something winning in the amazing candour with which she registered each impression. We chattered away happily after that for a longish time, strolling up and down the stone-flagged terrace that lay on one side of the house and ran along the river side of the first garden. Leaning over its low parapet, and looking across the road some twenty feet below us, we could just distinguish the white foam of the brawling stream as it broke over the stones. The long, northern summer twilight had faded at last, and there was darkness clinging about the old walls. Deep shadows without edges lay about us, and clear skies that lit us dimly without rays of light drew our eyes to the sky-

line of the moors high above us on either side of the valley. We were sitting on the moss-grown top of the wall, Marcelle having forgotten the yellow satin, when we looked round and found the Count standing beside us. She shrieked.

"Don't, Marcelle; think of the stillness," he said in a low voice.

"But you surprised me, Paul. And do you know that we are already great friends, and I have adjusted my mind to a new set of ideas about Miss Fairfax, and she is to call me 'Marcelle' and I her 'Lisa'—it is not ugly like 'Lizzie'. But where is your Sutcliffe?"

"He is going to play, and you must come and sit outside the drawing-room window with me and listen."

She jumped up exclaiming, "Delightful! and do you know, Paul, that Miss Fairfax—*c'est à dire*, Lisa—says that your Sutcliffe is a well-known author, and that half England talks about him? Isn't it amusing? And she and her sister have formed their minds on his books, or his articles, or his something and——"

Paul's voice sounded faintly irritable as he answered, "But I told you——"

"You told me that he was intelligent and far above the average English Catholic—*mais tiens*—he will hear me if I go on"—a discovery which she might have made sooner, as we were by now close to Mr. Sutcliffe, who was standing in the long window of the drawing-room with the end of a cigar in his mouth. I swore mentally that I would never tell anything to Marcelle again, and with hot cheeks I sank into a garden chair near the window. The Count sat down and told her to stop fidgeting, and Mr. Sutcliffe went to the piano.

"Whatever else he is," murmured the irrepressible lady by my side, "he has some true musical talent."

"*Silence!*" commanded Paul, and silence followed, only once broken by Marcelle exclaiming in a loud whisper that

she had stained her yellow satin, upon which the Count again said "*silence !*" in his imperious voice, and silence again followed. I thought our host had chosen the music beforehand, for there was no pause in the programme. I'm not really musical or music would make me deaf and blind to other things, whereas it generally makes me acutely conscious of everything about me even at the height of enjoyment. And there is no joy comparable to that joy, even for such as me. It all comes back to me now—the stillness, the darkness, the murmur of water, the Count's face, intensely white, his grey eyes still and fixed, Marcelle's beautiful countenance and the hungry soul that looked out of it, drinking greedily of the eternal harmonies. I leant back, very still, in a luxury of enjoyment that was not without the young element of surprise. "After all," the music seemed to say, "this world is not always dull, work-a-day, matter of fact, and the men and women in it are in reality beautiful. This great earth can be very still, and music is the soul of it." At last the sleepy head of Jacques put itself in at the drawing-room door.

"Night prayers," said the Count rising.

"Oh, dear !" said Marcelle, "must there always be prayers ?"

George Sutcliffe came out on the terrace. "Don't let her go to prayers," he said, looking at me.

"I don't want her to go, I don't want to go myself," said Marcelle. She threw back her head and clasped her hands behind it as she spoke. "Ah, the stars !" with a deep sigh of enjoyment ; "but," she muttered in a low voice, "it is mean not to say 'thank you,'" and quickly followed her brother indoors.

My eyes met Mr. Sutcliffe's, and we half-consciously told each other how beautiful she had looked at that moment.

"But you should hear her sing," he said, "only she won't do it when her brother is here."

"But why not ?"

“Oh, because she thinks it upsets him or excites him or something. She has quite a fine contralto, only she never gives herself time to practise. But you ought to go to bed. Don't wait—our hostess often forgets to say good-night.”

I went upstairs slowly, and as I reached the second landing the music was crashing away in the drawing-room. Relieved of the black and white Count, Mr. Sutcliffe was singing something boisterous from an *opera buffa*.

V.

NEXT morning I came down to breakfast, having slept like a top, feeling all the freshness and delight of the glorious climate and the glorious sunshine. I felt a little anxious as to whether coffee and rolls would satisfy the appetite that had come back to me.

"We make the English breakfast from the orders of Mr. Sutcliffe, and Paul has coffee in his room," Marcelle explained, and she certainly did justice to what she had provided. "I have heard of a dreadful thing," she went on, between mouthfuls of ham and sausage. "Imagine ! there is in this country, in this nineteenth century, a witch, or so the people here imagine"—she put down her knife and fork and clasped her large white hands in horror,—“and she is starving. They think she has been the cause of the death of a bull, of a very prize bull, in the next farm, so now they have what you call in Ireland boycotted her ; isn't it shocking ? ”

"Is it also true ? " said Mr. Sutcliffe, who had provided for all my wants at breakfast, unregarded by my hostess.

"Oh, but of course, or I should not tell you," Marcelle went on ; "well, *figurez-vous*, she is almost starving, and I want to take her food. Could you go a very long walk indeed, Miss Fairfax ? ”

"I should love it," I answered.

"And Mr. Sutcliffe would carry the food for the witch and for us. We shall want some luncheon, shan't we ? ”

"I should like it of all things," said Mr. Sutcliffe, with a mock, mendacious smile, "but I want to work at an article for the *Quarterly*."

"So," said Marcelle rising, "you will leave the poor old witch to starve, and you will be embarrassed with questions about her at the Last Day, all on account of an article for one of your wretched English reviews, with no real science or thought in them. I should like you to hear what they think of your reviews in Germany." She walked to the window flushed with her protest, and leaning out pulled at the petals of the blush roses growing on the wall. She was dressed in some rough white stuff that suited her. George Sutcliffe rose and followed.

"It may make little difference to the world of thought," he said, standing behind her, "but it makes a difference of £40 to me."

Marcelle turned round delighted. "*Tiens, comme c'est Anglais*, you are the most material people; fancy Paul remembering £40,—ah, *mais c'est trop fort*, another £40 to you is to mean another day's starvation to the witch."

"I wish you could just send her something, and let me do my work," said Mr. Sutcliffe weakly.

"Send!" she cried, "why it is twelve miles off at the least; besides, it is so beautiful, I have wanted for so long to see that valley."

"And Miss Fairfax is to walk twelve miles?" he said.

"No, no, that won't do; of course we must take the donkey for her to ride, and the donkey will do instead of you to carry the lunch."

"Thank you; then as there is another donkey, I may stay and finish my article."

"No, no, did I say anything like that? so very polite—I beg your pardon——" she held out some roses to him—"take these and forgive."

"Yes, if I may stay at home," he said, holding out his hand.

She tried to snatch them away. "Oh, these ungallant Englishmen!"

"I've got them," he said, "but they are so spoilt they are not worth keeping; however, it's such a fine day I will come, and finish my work to-night."

"Paul mustn't miss his music," she said, becoming suddenly serious.

"But I may miss my sleep," he observed half to himself, as he went out of the room with the remains of the roses in his hand.

Marcelle stood for a moment by the window smiling, then she turned to me.

"You won't be afraid of coming to feed the poor witch, will you? Mr. Sutcliffe will take care of you."

So I went up to get ready. I thought I should not have the fatigue of having to join much in the conversation while we three went to feed the witch.

"I was convinced from the first that there was 'no sich person,'" said Mr. Sutcliffe. He and I, and the donkey, were waiting in a steep street of a nominal village of scattered grey stone cottages and innumerable low walls of reddish brown stones without mortar. A little crowd of children gathered about us as Marcelle dashed in and out of cottages trying to make a few dull old people she could find direct us to the witch's cottage. Happily we knew also that the witch bore the very ordinary name of Mrs. Brown.

"It is part of a plot," she exclaimed to us in French as she came out of the last cottage; "they will not let us find her and help her." Marcelle was flushed and almost tearful. At last she allowed Mr. Sutcliffe to make the inquiries, and he made out our way to a lonely, miserable cottage, high up among the hills. By the time we got to the cottage Marcelle's benevolence was at a white heat. The door was opened by one of the sternest and most forbidding old

women it was ever my lot to see. She demanded our business, and was obviously divided between resentment at our good intentions and a determination to keep whatever Marcelle had brought her without saying "thank you," or asking us into the cottage.

"You can put down the hamper," was her most cordial observation. Her only human inclination was to describe the very painful disease from which she was suffering, and the appalling treatment which she had given herself. After this she abruptly inquired how long we should be staying, and I with difficulty persuaded the discouraged Marcelle to retire.

"And I am to leave my good things, my meat pie, my very best cognac, and not even have a thank you? *Non, c'est trop fort, je ne veux pas*, I will not; I will have the things back."

"You had better not try," said George. "I heard her bolt the door the moment we turned away. Besides, what's the matter? she was starving, and you have fed her. Wasn't that your object?"

"I don't believe she is starving a bit," said Marcelle, white with anger; "she looks quite fat, quite covered; what a horrid, odious, diseased woman! It was absurd to come, *un procédé tout-à-fait ridicule*."

Then seeing that we were laughing she abruptly recovered her temper, and laughed too, and said we were "*très gentils*" and "*très bons*" to take it like that.

It was a glorious evening full of light and air as we came back over the moors. There was such lightness of breathing, such full peace in seeing, as I have only known in a few days in my life. Marcelle became very quiet, our laughter had died down, but the merriment of it underlay our growing restfulness of spirit. Marcelle took her turn on the donkey, and I strode on with an energy I had not known for many a long day, "stepping westwards" towards the setting

sun. At the foot of the hills we turned into a little dark wood, and from that we emerged on to the high road between the station and Peak Hall, a narrow and rough one. A dogcart came suddenly clattering round a sharp corner close beside us. Marcelle cried, "It is Arcot and Sharpe; they will miss the train". She jumped off the donkey, and at the same moment the man who was driving pulled up a few yards farther on. Marcelle hurried towards them, and Mr. Sutcliffe said to me in a quick, low voice, "Get on the donkey and don't notice them, I hate that man". He busied himself helping me to mount, and Marcelle called out at the same moment to tell us not to wait. So we went slowly on our way. Mr. Sutcliffe was silent for some minutes.

"Who is it?" I ventured at last.

He gave one of his big laughs, but he looked annoyed all the same, and his forehead was frowning ominously. He rubbed his hands against each other with great vigour before answering.

"'Why he, a harmless necessary cat;' and I Arcot? But you know that was why we were sent to hunt the witch."

"Why, who sent us?" I said innocently.

"The Comte d'Etranges." He looked back along the road to see if Marcelle were near. "You see," he went on, "the Count will hobnob with intriguers of that description. One of those is a seedy American who lives in Rome to make mischief or money, and the other is the journalist who publishes the same mischief to enlighten the British public. I don't know that any of it much matters, only I can't get Paul d'Etranges to see that such men are fatal to any cause."

I pulled up my slow-moving donkey and said: "But do explain to me what *is* the 'cause' and what is the object for which they have come to England. Mademoiselle d'Etranges spoke of this 'cause' last night."

He laughed this time until the sound echoed about us.

"That is just the point I want to settle myself. Is it a real cause or is it moonshine? and whichever it is, what is the good of dragging in the scum of the earth to help him and then pretending that he hardly knows them? He meant them to get away before we got back."

Again silence, while he walked on one side of the road and my donkey on the other.

"How long have you known the Count?" I asked at length.

"Almost a year. I met him at the house of an old friend, a parish priest in the East End; a man of an extraordinary brain; a perfect mass of useless learning. He was quite excited at giving me a chance of meeting the Count, and I, in my insular ignorance, had never even heard of him then. Well, we made a night of it, the most amazing night. That fellow, sitting in the stuffy little room, talked philosophy till four in the morning, and—I hardly believe it now—but instead of being bored I was in a whirl of excitement. It was amazing, astonishing. That death's head of his never moved nor his skinny hands; he sat stock still, he might have been a lay figure, even his lips hardly moved. I was too excited to sleep that night, and I was wild to see him again. After that we took long walks all over London, and my goodness, how he talked! It was real stuff too. I know just enough to be sure that his philosophy is quite first-rate. He knows his Kant and his Hegel as well or better than anybody in England. They think no end of him in Germany among the sets that know him."

"Well, but what's the 'cause,' the object?"

"You will have to swear by those donkey's ears that you won't be as indiscreet as I am."

"Most solemnly."

We both, and the donkey, paused and looked behind to see if Marcelle were coming.

"It is, as far as I can make out, the reform of the intel-

lectual condition of the Church Catholic and Universal. I smell something of Christian Socialism in the business, which is not much in my line, but it is what attracts his sister. He regards Catholicism as the one hope for religion and order in the future—as the one effective defence against infidelity and anarchism. But the Church cannot triumph unless it assimilates modern science, and keeps its hold on the people. It must be scientific and democratic. One of the first articles of the Count's creed is death to Scholasticism, and there I'm partly with him. He is to bring the seminaries up to date in historical criticism, and there I say '*chi va piano va sano*,' for after all it is a science in its infancy. But then, Miss Fairfax, he is the most unpractical man on the face of the earth, and the most amazingly self-confident. Here's a business that is to affect part of the inhabitants of every spot on the globe. It is no mere local or national or even European controversy, but the handling of the intellectual life of the mightiest religious polity the world has ever seen. Take it in his own favourite way, and call it the largest, the deepest, the widest expression of the religion of the human race. And to him, all he wants done is so perfectly simple. He knows so little of human nature; he has no philosophy of action, he leaves everything to ideas. Teach the young priests philosophy up to date, shake the Vatican like a bottle of medicine till you get the right things at the top, and you will have a Catholic Church made in Germany, and fit, according to him, to guide and to embody the thought of the human race. Mind you, all the same, the man has so much force, so much power of infectious thought, that it is amazingly interesting to watch him and to see what will come of him. I conclude that you don't know his story from the way you speak."

"No, indeed, I don't."

"Well, he is now, I suppose, forty-five. About fifteen years ago he came to the front as a politician in Paris,

and great things were expected of him. He was known to be a complete unbeliever, a strong thinker, and expected to prove a leader of men. He was the heir to the great properties he now owns, but he always seemed quite aloof from the considerations of wealth and ease. He had admirers, but not, I think, many friends. It was for a very brief space that he was in men's minds. Then he announced that he did not feel his intellectual position to be sufficiently well reasoned, or his opinions on a clear enough basis, for him to come forward as a politician. His sister showed me the other day a witty article in the *Figaro*, laughing at the young aristocrat who had played at patriotism and appeared to have the earnestness of a young English nobleman embarking on political life, but who then withdrew with the remarks of a German philosophical student. 'While Mons. le Comte is finding a logical basis for action, true Frenchmen have to act, not to dream,' was the conclusion. The outcome of the next five years, during which Paris forgot his existence, was that the Count emerged a professed Catholic, and announced that in the Church alone could modern thought and religious faith 'make one music' in a world fast hurrying to destruction. Neither the Church nor the world paid much attention to what he had to say. The world does not listen to the Church, he wrote, because the Church does not fulfil her true mission; she lives and works in the present hour, but she does not look forward. If she did, she would not ignore the thinkers who, obscure or unpractical as they may be, are in reality preparing a public opinion which will take the Church by surprise. He certainly thinks it his mission, as I was just saying, to rouse ecclesiastics in authority to the intellectual situation. By now, although he is barely thought of in public life, he has a very large following among intellectual people on the Continent. You will soon notice what an immense correspondence he carries on; and at least he has proved his sincerity by giving up all that the world

values for his object. His life is almost alarmingly complete; he sleeps, and eats, and walks, simply to keep the machine in better order to subserve his mission. And yet"—and Mr. Sutcliffe sighed and looked half-humorously perplexed—"sometimes I think his ideas are all sheer moonshine, and a form of madness that may spoil one's own small bit of work for the Church in helping to reconcile the new learning of these days with the eternal truths she has to guard. At other times I feel as if he were the God-sent thinker to do that very work. I have sat listening to him and watching the singular gleam when he seems to have an eye within an eye which sees a vision not granted to others—the vision of a Church, glorious and conquering, the expression and the crown of a complete world of knowledge, where the human and the Divine clash no more even seemingly. I don't know why I should say all this, only that we are thrown together in this strange house, and I feel that you will understand. But then, Miss Fairfax, if d'Etranges is the man providentially sent to us at this moment, why has he the strange element that makes him seek out these unprincipled journalists? And why has he such an unshrinking touch when he would handle the Ark of the Lord?"

The last words were spoken in such a low voice that I could hardly hear them. It was a curious little outburst, very unlike Mr. Sutcliffe as I got to know him afterwards. Perhaps it is easier to be unreserved with an almost total stranger, than it is later on when further intimacy has revealed to us the complications that divide all minds, unless there is a special union of the heart. We were silent, and I felt a friendly glow towards the man at my side as we went slowly forwards until Marcelle overtook us.

I wish I could draw a distinct portrait of George Sutcliffe as he was then—it might make my story clearer—but there are reasons not to be given here why it is especially difficult for me to see the clear outline of such a picture.

Mr. Sutcliffe was at this time about thirty, and as I had told Mary three years before, he could not be said to be handsome. His figure was tall, broad and muscular, the arms a little too long and the head decidedly too large to be in proportion. His features were squarely cut and rather heavy, and the eyes were small, but the glance was full of life and he had a sweet smile. We used to tease him, when I knew him better, about a certain unconscious ferocity of expression he sometimes fell into. We declared that he was the image of a most ferocious and prominent figure in an old picture hanging in a passage at Peak Hall, representing a press-gang going about to devour the harmless countrymen during the Napoleonic wars. Marcelle once said that when he came into the room giving a big laugh at some joke of his own, he made her think of a group of Englishmen in Shakespeare's historical plays. "Enter the Earls of Suffolk, Gloucester and Hereford." That Mr. Sutcliffe had been in the Navy was proved by his walk, but he had not the preciseness and neatness of a sailor, and he was curiously indifferent to big or small possessions; he had not even a favourite pocket-knife or an old watch. Yet there was much about him of the schoolboy, and at times it seemed impossible to make him serious. He would have jested on the scaffold, like Sir Thomas More, and have gone there quite as readily. As a Catholic he was indeed in the true English style. For if he would have died with More for the Papal prerogatives, he would have died as willingly in the defence of his country against the Spanish Armada. Very humble and very independent, he owed both characteristics to the absolute clearness of his faith.

Mr. Sutcliffe was by nature a man of action. But circumstances had made him realise that the field for action in the present day for all who are interested in religion is an intellectual one. If he had lived only among his own kinsfolk, or if he had continued in the Navy, he would never

in all probability have become interested in the subjects that drew him into friendship with the Comte d'Etranges. In a most impressionable moment, not long after his eldest brother's death, and when he was burdened with too many empty days, he made a friendship which had a singular effect upon him. His parents had persuaded him to leave the Navy, yet in practical matters he was not really needed in his own home. He could not leave his parents in their time of sorrow, and his only sister's marriage soon made them lean on him the more. He determined to study hard to make up for what he had lost during his life at sea, although even then he had always managed to read a good deal. He had a turn for science, which was the immediate occasion of his making friends with Professor Telles, a young man of already European reputation. This friendship became the chief interest of his life. When Telles married the friendship only deepened. It was an ideal marriage; both were young, handsome, with great gifts, unworldly, loving work and loving each other in an absolute union. "They had," Mr. Sutcliffe said afterwards, "the riches of nature showered on them,—were her complete children. They were pagans, not in the sense of worshipping idols, but in their entire ignoring of a supernatural world. There was no apostate touch about them; they did not dislike religion; they had never been brought across it, and they did not trouble their heads about it."

After three years of married life, while travelling with Mr. Sutcliffe in the North of Spain, Professor Telles died of diphtheria after three days' illness, in agonies of pain. Nature in the end seemed brutal to her spoilt child. No one, I think, has ever known what Mr. Sutcliffe saw, and suffered by seeing, while he was the only companion of Mrs. Telles. It was the end of his youth.

When he came home his mother was startled and alarmed. His brother's death had made no such mark on him. The

next three years were to him the story of the sorrow and the illness of Mrs. Telles. His parents thought he was in love with her; he and she knew better. It was a great friendship. It was on his part a great agony to comfort her. He blamed himself intensely that his friend had died without any religious help. He would fain have brought some hope to the widow. But soon he realised—bit by bit was forced to realise—that he might as well read Shakespeare to a Red Indian as talk religion to this cultured English-woman. It never even dawned upon her that there could be any possibility be any rational side to Christianity. She had learnt it in early life in a form which made it quite inevitable to her and had thenceforth shut it out for ever from her mind. Their worlds of thought were miles asunder. He would have had far more in common with a Chinaman or a Hindoo. For three years he studied, he prayed, he devoted himself to Mrs. Telles and then she died; glad, she said, unutterably glad, that it was all over. This long absorption had no doubt kept him from public life and from marriage. Indeed, at the latter part of it he was almost a sick-nurse.

This experience gave a bent to his activities which they would not naturally have had. As some men who have been thrown across physical horrors give up their whole lives to the struggle to diminish, however little, the misery they have seen, George Sutcliffe, after his friendship with Mrs. Telles, threw himself heart and soul into the controversies between the Christian ethics and the pagan. He was haunted by her three years' agony; he had sounded the depths of a soul without hope in this world or the next. And he found his co-religionists immensely blind to what he wanted them to do. He wanted them to understand that there was a world of thought, and of thinkers, almost unknown to them as they sat at home at ease in faith and plenty. He wanted them to understand how the

usual text-books used by Catholics in this country, were not only inadequate to express the great truths of religion, but were almost unintelligible to those who had been educated in the language of a new civilisation. That that civilisation might be decadent and morbid was not the point, the point being that it was in possession of the minds of men. Greek may be a finer language than English, but it is not usually of so much use in dealing with the inhabitants of the British Isles.

His practical English mind demanded that something should be done to bridge the chasm between the very rich in spiritual gifts and the very desolate. If he had found and realised the prevalence of some horrible disease he would have said: "What's to be done now?" and in the same way he demanded of busy, tired, parish priests and comfortable, quiet old laymen, "What's to be done now to make faith intelligible and reasonable to the minds of such people as the Telles?"

Some years before they met the Comte d'Etranges noticed two articles by George Sutcliffe, which struck him by their rare gift of intellectual common-sense and the author's sympathetic treatment of his opponents. He had been on the look-out for the writer from that time onward, and spared no pains to annex him when they were thrown together.

VI.

AFTER my talk with Mr. Sutcliffe that afternoon, I listened more attentively to the Count's conversation during dinner. To me my host was courteous, but as if he were not quite conscious of my being there at all. To George Sutcliffe he talked of Church history, and to me the vividness of his word-pictures was astonishing. I remember wondering if it were with intention that he so often alluded to the use which great rulers and leaders made of the baser kind of humanity.

"You are such an Idealist," he said to George, "you should realise that in all ages there has been some one equivalent to the modern journalist. At one time he was a letter writer, at another a playwright, often a poet. At all times there needs must be interpreters between the thinker and the crowd."

"No, I'm not an Idealist," laughed the other, "I'm a practical man, therefore I see more of the proportion of things. You, being an Idealist, when you condescend to practical matters deal with everything in a mass without discrimination. You don't realise journalism as a profession embracing heights and depths. You don't care to know if the man who advertises your ideas is a serious, conscientious man of honour or a mere gossip. You are too much above and apart from the world of practical life to deal with it successfully."

"Perhaps there is something in what you say," said the

Count frankly, and he looked a little depressed. "But how is mind ever to do its work, how are ideas ever to gain ground, if you do not try to deal with the practical world?" There was a marked melancholy in his penetrating voice: something pathetic, too, in the luminous eyes: something of solemn sadness as he looked beyond us, as if seeking for a vision not far off. It was the look Mr. Sutcliffe had described to me that afternoon.

"I really don't know," said George laughing; "but I don't believe it pays to press into the service of ideas men who are incapable of understanding them. You will be astonished by the travesty of your philosophy which they will give to the world. If you want to destroy a man's character, or preach revolt, or get up an enthusiasm for individuals, low instruments may be of use; like a noisy drum, they call attention. But don't put anything too precious in their hands."

Next morning I was sorry to find that our host had gone to London for several days. But what delicious days those were which put him out of my mind! What glorious long hours on the moors when I drank in beauty, joy, peace, and assimilated the summer brightness with the facility of youth. Joy, peace and health may, often do, come later in life, but never again the clearness of a pleasure that is unhaunted by memory or unshadowed by fear.

The Count came back late one night after we had gone to bed. The next morning Marcelle came into my room before I was even thinking of getting up. I noticed at once a suspicion of tears on her eyelashes. Marcelle's dark eyes were not hard and inexpressive, as black eyes too often are; it was a clear lucent darkness suggestive of simplicity and receptivity, not of dull resistance.

"I am distressed," she said, sitting down on my bed. "I have made a confusion, I have forgotten to copy Paul's article for the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, and it will now be too

late. It is serious for many reasons. I have been too much amused, too forgetful. Could I not have spared just one hour a day and copied the article? Then, too, I forgot to practise some music for Benediction. I am discouraged with myself."

She looked quite forlorn.

"When ought the article to have gone?" I asked.

"It ought to go at half-past ten o'clock this morning."

"And now it is half-past seven. How long is it? May I help? Could we not manage it between us?"

Marcelle leapt up at the suggestion, and ran screaming about the house demanding coffee and rolls, demanding Paul, and even the sleeping Mr. Sutcliffe. By half-past eight we four were sitting at a big oak table in the Count's study writing for dear life. I was immensely excited. George was obviously bored, but worked doggedly, and Marcelle was in the fever of repentance. Happily for me, my German was the best part of my education. At first I hardly noticed what I was copying; but as I went on the words caught hold of me. There was a cold passion about them, a curiously abstract fervour. They had an intensity of feeling for ideas so abstract that the feeling became a thing too mental to be called feeling. The article made on me a new impression; it touched some facet of my young mind that had never reflected anything before. I looked up, half-puzzled, half-admiring, wholly happy in the sense of expansion, and glanced towards the Count. I expected to see nothing but his forehead and hair as he bent over his copying, but I found, to my surprise, that he was watching me. I coloured, but he did not look away; his quiet scrutiny rested on me as if he were quite indifferent to any sensation it might produce on my part. To relieve myself I looked quickly at the others and saw that they too had become excited. Marcelle made one or two incoherent mutterings.

"I would put the reference to Comte here," George

said presently. The Count rose, took down a book and looked out the passage. It was getting near to ten o'clock and I was becoming anxious ; but by a quarter-past ten it was obvious that we had succeeded. By half-past ten Jacques' announcement that the post had arrived was received with a loud "Hurrah!" echoed by us all, even the Count, although he did not raise his eyes from a volume of Hegel he had taken up after finishing his copy.

"Now for more breakfast!" cried George.

"There are heaps of ham and things," said Marcelle ;
"we will devour them all."

They went off to the dining-room noisy and cheerful, and I was left with my host.

"That line of thought is new to you?" he said, looking up from his book.

"All thought is new to me, I think," I said humbly.

"No," he said, "it is not so, or you could not have responded like that. How many English or French girls would have found such an article in the least interesting!"

"But I don't understand it," I said, flattered, but trying to be sincere.

I certainly did not then, and do not now comprehend all he said to me that morning, but the mental sensations were wonderful. He talked to me at first of Kant, then, I think, of Hegel, and lastly, and most of all, of Comte. I can only compare the effect on my young mind to the effect of stretching on an india-rubber band. And yet, although I was taken much too far and left slack afterwards, I was intensely happy.

We wandered out into the garden. I might have been an old philosopher, a thinker and student ; he treated me exactly as an equal, and to a girl uneducated by poor Miss Mills it was absolutely intoxicating. It added to the excitement that it was the first time he had taken any notice of me. I knew from Marcelle how rarely he was seen before

luncheon-time, but for three mortal hours he talked to me that morning.

After we got into the garden our talk paused for a moment as if to give place to the river, which was full enough to tumble loudly over the brown stones, and not "too full for sound or foam".

"In the quotation you copied," said Paul at length, as if in unbroken sequence of what had gone before, "Comte was intoxicated with the truth he saw, and was about to misuse it. Humanity he saw rightly and truly with the big H which has been too often laughed at. He saw the human race as an organic whole, as one living body, growing and changing, as does the human body, but, as it has been said, 'changing in order to remain the same'. He saw, too, how the evil in it was passed and dropped in its great march onward—or, if you like it better, how inflowing onward, the waters of the river of life, swelled by a million streams, ever left impurity, mud and stagnant growths behind, and passed on. Which is the most living thing to the greatest number of men now, which has the greatest power over their lives, the love and holiness of an obscure saint, or the cruelty and obscenity of a Roman Emperor? Evil, as Comte saw, comes to nought; only the good endures. Only the good in the past still lives, only the good in the present will endure. All that truly lives is good and must endure. He saw, as in a great vision, the persistent vitality of holiness, the truths reflected in genius, the yearning of pity, the endurance of pain, and 'These,' he said, 'are Humanity,' and overcome by the vision, he fell down and adored. Jacob, dazzled by the beauty of the Angel, would have adored him. Does it surprise us that Comte fell down before the vision of the Communion of Saints? Yet in no mirror shall we ever be satisfied with gazing, and he committed the huge absurdity of bidding mankind fall in love with itself. The old parable taught him nothing, Narcissus was to do it over and over

again. Instead of adoring the Divine, which is imperfectly manifested in human history, men were to worship Humanity itself. But to me at least there are no waters so utterly cold to drown in as those of the Positivist worship. Yet we cannot neglect the truth as Comte saw it from his own individual angle. It is true—that body of holiness in the past, it is true that it is ever purged, that it ever leaves the dross behind, that each soul, the babe born only to die, the honest toiler, the lover of lost sheep, the patient endurer, do live now and are one at whatever time they sojourned in the flesh. The corporate holiness of the race is a real undying reflection of the Divine. It is true, too, that the brooding soul of the solitary must be at one with his fellow-creatures or it will perish.

‘Oh let me love my love unto myself alone,
Oh let me know my knowledge to the world unknown,’

is the voice of disease and failure, not health.”

His cool, musical voice seemed to pause in the air above me. I instinctively turned my eyes to his, and I seemed held by the cold, clear light I looked into.

“‘It is not good for man to be alone.’ All religions that the world has ever known are based on the fact that as it is impossible for a man to live alone or to act alone, so it is impossible for him to think alone. As in everything else, so in religion we must be many in one, and to be one we must have an organised life. But as we rise to the conception not of individual nations but of Humanity as a whole, as one organisation, we also need that there should be one organised religion, universal, international, corporate; and that religion, Miss Fairfax, you and I know to be the Catholic Church—the Church which gathers and preserves in its action, its teaching, its liturgy, the imperishable fragments of holiness in human history.”

His impassioned accents alone would have shown the listener that here was his favourite theme, his dream, his ideal.

“ But, if it be this, Miss Fairfax, we must not say it is a new doctrine from the time of Christ. We must be profoundly convinced of the truth that Christianity, that Catholicism was from the beginning of the world, that all nations were blest in it, all truth belonged to it, and that it was the consecration of all virtue. It might be a mere abstraction, the dream of a feverish genius like Comte, if it were not for a concrete actual history. Seek for the truths of Comte in the Bible, and you will find them. ‘ For in Adam all fell, *there* is the organic unity. And as in Judaism, the truths scattered among the nations were voiced in a special way, so now the truths throughout the world are embodied in the Catholicism that grew out of Judaism. Humanity was a body, the chosen people were its religious expression ; it is still the same—Humanity—all that is holy and lasting in human history—and the Catholic Church is its expression. And as now all those who love God throughout the world are Catholics without knowing it, so then from Job to a Greek dying at Thermopylæ, or a slave in submission to unjust torture, all these were of the chosen people. ‘ So in Christ all shall rise again ’—*there* is the unity that survives, the unity of holiness. You may call that the cry of the great poet nature in St. Paul, you may dwell on the extraordinary constructive power of his imagination, as he massed humanity in his vision, as he built up the glories of the Bride of Christ. For by Christ had been all things, and all things had been saved by Christ. How amazing, for instance, was that assertion that his forefathers wandering in the desert had drunk of Christ. But it is not Paul only, it is Christ Himself who continually points out the unity of His teaching with that of Abraham, and then calmly tells us, as it were, the whole Divine secret, ‘ Before Abraham was I am ’.”

The Count was talking chiefly to himself, and yet he was conscious that he was talking to me. I felt his curious strength exerted on me as with aim and purpose. He had

the ego that must subdue others and does it with a certain enjoyment of its own strength, as natural, as unforced as the play of muscles in an athlete. To those who do not understand it is repulsive—why should this man rule over us? But to those who in any department are of like make, in whatever degree, it is sheer enjoyment; to them it feels like an enlargement of their own powers, it is as if David found he could walk in Saul's armour and gloried in it. Mine was already, at once, the instinctive enjoyment of the disciple, the attitude of a disciple out of which so much may come, that the world follows the instinct of its own common-sense in mocking at it. Yet it is inherent in many people, and those not of the lowest sort. Only when I recognise it in the young, and remember my own youth, I pray that the teacher or leader they may choose may have many other qualities besides the genius which compelled my most willing submission.

I have heard Paul discourse since, many, many times, but who that has made a friendship or gained a teacher is not almost envious of the first time, the first keen impression? The thoughts are learnt and become part of your mind; they are loved better and known better, and we would not be without their growth at any cost; but still we should like just to know again, if it were only for the sake of comparison, that first thrill, that first expansion.

The Count had other things to say that morning. "I insist on Comte," he went on, "in my article and elsewhere, because in one sense nearly all moderns are consciously or unconsciously Positivists. Positivism has been called Catholicism without Christianity. For as civilisation increases and prejudice dies away, the beauty of the vision of peace appeals to all culture; and while the intellect remains sceptical, the moral instincts, undisturbed by the conflict of reason with the supernatural, can enjoy the beauty of a St. Francis and can place a Virgin Mother in the very centre

of the ideal world. But it is still part of the Narcissus infatuation we spoke of just now. Only what we must see and recognise as valid in this is the truth that the supernatural will now attract self-conscious man, only by proving itself eminently natural. Show me how in the root and depth of my humanity I may find the truths of the Beatitudes; let me feel that the miraculous is only in Newman's phrase an 'intensification of a natural process' uninterpreted by man; let me feel how aroused by no external suggestion of great good news, but by the cravings of my humanity, my soul is athirst for God, and I can say, 'I see the whole design,'—my lowness and the sanctity of Christ have the same origin. I recognise the handiwork of the Artist. There are the same methods whether in the visions of Teresa or the genius of Napoleon. Comte worshipped both, while I adore their Maker. I love to recognise the same nervous organisation in the saint and the genius, I love to see how in the scientist or the lay-sister, the meek and patient do possess the earth, that the pure in heart see visions, and how the poor in spirit alone enjoy their vast possessions. Let us not be troubled, Miss Fairfax, at this change in the human mind; it is self-realisation; the deeper we go into our nature the more complete will be the vision—we will go down into the valleys to get a clearer view of the mountain tops. Let us have all that is human; let us, with Comte, call it corporate, and as we recognise the needs of all Humanity as the same, we recognise Humanity expressed in the Catholic Church. If we appreciate in a wholly natural way the beauty of St. Francis, the richness of renunciation, the ideal of purity, let us acknowledge by our own theory that to worship these has always been a human inclination; and, whether by the quaintest ceremonial, or the most ridiculous multiplication of relics, our fathers have done all this before us, and the Catholic Church encouraged while it restrained them."

On he talked, and up and down we walked, while the sun moved higher in the heavens and the river tumbled more gently as the rain supply of the night had flowed past. Strange what healing of the soul, or calming of the nerves, or exaltation of the imagination took hold of me! Only a fortnight ago in the heavy shadows of the conifers, in the softer air of the Surrey garden, perplexity and misery, doubt, or fear of doubt, had possessed me—a nervous suspicion that after all the supernatural must be, had been found out, proved to be a delusion, because so much of it was merely natural. Now it was because it was so intensely natural that this new teacher of mine claimed submission to the supernatural. It was because it did not crush but developed, did not thwart but trained, did not despise but loved, nature, that I was to recognise in the supernatural the voice of the God of nature.

My eyes filled with happy tears, my mind turned, as it were, to a great rest, and I knew with a leap of joy how all the while my soul had never really lost its bearings, and that my faith had given me pain just on account of its vitality.

There was much more than I can convey said by the Count that morning, there was much more than an untrained girl of twenty-two could even glimpse at. I wish somebody else could convey what the thrilling, yet cold voice said to me, what those compelling and yet not wholly sympathetic eyes were voicing also, how he built up before me the great construction with its foundations in the heart of the sinner, and its spires in the holiness of the saints, and then made me recognise that the whole lost its meaning, its objective existence, if it were other than the Bride of Christ, the time-reflection of the Eternal.

But at last the morning drew to a close, and ended in a bell calling us to food, and as I joined Marcelle in a half-

dazed state in the dining-room, I discovered that I was very hungry.

The Count stayed a few moments, drank a glass of wine, and proposed a walk with George Sutcliffe.

"*Est-il interessant, mon Paul ?*" said Marcelle, looking at me triumphantly as we were left alone. "Does he write well? Can he think? Can he excite ideas? Can he exhaust the nerves? Poor little thing," she added, with a touch of quite unusual gentleness, "you must rest."

And indeed I don't think I was as well after that morning, and my looks disappointed my mother when I got home again a few days later. But the good done to my mind, even from the point of view of health, in the long run quite outweighed the incidental fatigue.

I rested that afternoon and slept heavily. When I came down at about five o'clock I found a young priest talking to Marcelle in the garden. It was Father Duly, who came to Peak Hall every Saturday to Monday. He was a young, active, bright-faced, blue-eyed Irishman, full of life and zest and "go". He was devoted to the d'Etranges, and he proved a true friend as years went on. Before they came to live in those parts Father Duly had hard work in trying to find and keep together the scattered Catholics living very far apart among the hills. The old aunt who had left the Hall to the Comte d'Etranges was steady in the practice of her religion but did not trouble about her neighbours' souls. But in Marcelle Father Duly had found a kindred spirit, and in the Count he had gained more than the intellectual intercourse his keen Irish mind had wished for and missed among the neighbouring priests. He had come a day before his time as Marcelle was anxious about an old man who was ill in the next valley.

Soon the Count and George came back, and Father Duly went off on his visit to the old man.

The sun was setting in rosy brightness as we four paced

the flagged stone terrace to the music of the noisy river. The Count was on my right and George on my left, and next to him Marcelle. We began by abusing a semi-religious magazine, and we had called it insufferable, insolent, narrow, intolerable.

"It comes to this," the Count then said, "we must start an organ of our own."

I hear his clear low tones now, and see him put his hand on Mr. Sutcliffe's shoulder, "And you must be the editor".

"Forbid it, Heaven!" exclaimed George.

"You are the only man in this country who can do it," Paul went on, "with your fame and your powers."

"To think that you should sink to flattery," George murmured, but the Count paid no attention to him.

"Listen," he said. "There is in this country no Catholic intellectual organ of any kind whatever, and, Heavens!—the need of it! You and half a dozen others are the only men with a suspicion of what is going on in the world of thought. How can truths penetrate, how can thought infect this hopeless mass of Catholics if you don't exert yourselves? It would not matter," there was a deep ring of true feeling in his voice as he went on, "if they were not Catholics. But that the salt of the earth, the heirs of the religious experience, of the human race, should sink into a pious stupidity, and make the Catholicism at the heart of your empire a mockery and a scorn to the thinkers that pass by! You may increase in numbers, and build towers to reach the heavens; but the ordinary German student, in his attic in any university, knows something of the history of the Bible, and the working out of the religious instinct in the world-story, which is a sealed book to you here. It is terrible, it cannot be so left. Time will punish, thought must triumph. It will reach the mass of Catholics at last. And this is how it will be brought home to them. They will see all the active young minds, the men they expect to become the pillars of

the Church turning round upon them. They will see these men demanding answers to the questions we thinkers are forbidden to put now. And if we are not allowed to adjust modern thought and Catholic thought to 'make one music as before,' these young men will find no answers ready and will turn away—it is so easy to turn away, in the pride and strength of youth—to find elsewhere the mental food their Mother has denied to them."

Something like this he said; but how poor it sounds now, how thrilling it seemed then!

"Ah, he will help us, Paul," cried Marcelle, very gently in French.

George turned to her. "Yes, of course there is nothing I want to do more, but I want to do it in my own way. Why should you ask me to be anything so tiresome as an editor?"

"It need not be very odious, and we would do much of the work for you," she said.

"If I do it," said Sutcliffe, "I must do it myself. But honestly, what would be the good of it, who would read it?"

"*Ah, pour ça,*" said Marcelle, "you must write first and then make people read. How can they begin to read before anything is written?"

"There is a good deal in what she says," observed the Count.

"I know," said Mr. Sutcliffe, in amused impatience; "but the question is, how, or rather what to write that the public is fit to receive? It is of no use to give people things for which they are totally unprepared. Truly, Count, there are many more quiet students and honest thinkers at work in England among us Catholics than you know: they are preparing the ground."

"Very slowly," I said. "But, Mr. Sutcliffe, there is a medium. You need not plunge into the most burning questions—you might educate us gradually. Let us have

something more intellectual, more interesting than we have now, with wider sympathies and a wider outlook."

I felt rather pleased at my own venture, and the Count's smile made me glow with pride.

"Yes, Miss Fairfax puts it best," he said; "let us not startle, let us educate."

"I do own," said George, "that the reviews and magazines we groan under now are the chief reason for trying to get something better. But to be practical, whoever is the editor, it will be a long time before he can make a public, and where is the money to come from meanwhile? For a long time such a review must be run at a dead loss."

"The money need not be considered," said Paul quietly. "I will be responsible."

"You might have to be responsible for several thousands," said George.

"Certainly," answered Paul, in a voice which seemed to imply that no more need be said on that point.

VII.

It was not until the evening that I had an opportunity of asking Mr. Sutcliffe if he had not been greatly struck by the Count's article.

"It is magnificent," he said; "it is to my mind the greatest thing he has done yet. There is a large sweep of thought, a sense of world-history in it that is to me astonishing. He must have read enormously. Every page is packed with thought and built up on masses of knowledge. Now you have begun to see his powers for yourself. I was amused this morning to see you being initiated. The next step will be the discovery of your leading talent——"

"If I've got one," I interposed.

"Yes, or perhaps even if you have not."

I laughed. "One need not waste time in trying to be humble with you," I said.

"Then," he went on, "you will be set to work at whatever it is: and expect no mercy. You will have to work like a nigger."

"If all the work were like this morning I should love it. It was really a splendid morning!"

"It was a most wonderful morning," he answered, so seriously as to make me wonder how he had spent it. Afterwards I found that he and Marcelle had spent it on the moors. I felt a little sorry, a little sad, thinking they had not missed me.

For the next two or three days we were all very busy, and

George Sutcliffe worked in his room, and the Count employed Marcelle and myself in various ways. I copied a good deal and then I read aloud to him. My eyes used to get tired and so did my throat, but I never thought that of any consequence. Then, after meals the men talked and we listened, and I enjoyed myself hugely. We had long walks in the morning; sometimes all four together, sometimes the Count and I, and the other two together. It was intensely interesting and seemed so full of great and important things.

In those days I fell into Marcelle's way of talking of "The Cause" and then of "Our Cause". I caught something of her detached, non-national way of looking at things. I felt her independence of conventionality to be due to her curiously cosmopolitan habits. With her the experience of many citizens of many cities had not produced a conventional worldliness, but the loss of a definite standpoint. She would contemplate the feelings of a French or a German or an English woman with regard to marriage, for one instance, with a curious, dispassionate analysis. I have always thought the international view of life a very tiring one for a young mind. Conventionality, when it means a national growth of habits and instincts, is a deeply rooted need of our nature. Part of the world-weariness of the present day comes from the breaking-down of our international barriers.

"I have tried the question of marriage in France and in Germany," she said one evening, as she and I and Mr. Sutcliffe sat in the garden resting after a long walk. Mr. Sutcliffe was to leave in the evening after dinner. "A marriage was nearly completed for me in France—quite all it should be. I think it might have answered."

I groaned audibly.

"You mustn't be alarmed," she answered. "It was completely dropped. My mother had never been keen about it, and the debts were found to be bigger than was supposed. I was rather in favour of it, and I wanted Paul to make his

home with me. Then my mother married again, and I was able to go to Paul. He would never consent to live with my mother."

"And in Germany?" I asked. George Sutcliffe was silent.

"Ah, in Germany!" she laughed and almost blushed. "I made a muddle of my own self. I thought I would marry some nice paternal man, a thorough good philosopher, a serious Catholic; and then we would make a *ménage* with Paul. Any real thinker would have been proud to live with Paul. But it was all too ideal. There were only a few Catholics really up to date, and these were priests. Besides, I found the beer and sausage element did better at a distance. But it would have been an ideal life!—full of work and thought and simplicity; the right life for a Christian." She looked for a moment full of enthusiasm, then she glanced at us both and laughed. "To tell the truth, there was one man might have done, but he didn't want me! He thought I should make an indifferent *Hausfrau*."

"Then there is the English way left," I said, watching her.

"Ah, *mon Dieu*," she said, "that I could not stand; conceive all that nonsense! In a properly arranged marriage all is peace and quiet. But in England to begin with a fuss about love, and then another fuss when he stops loving you, and then perhaps a third fuss if you try to console yourself, and a fourth fuss when you make up the quarrel, an appalling fuss when he dies, or else a fuss up to the end about Darby and Joan and memories of the past. *O ciel!* what a hopeless giving yourself out in bits, no dignity, no independence! I'd rather be an Eastern slave right out than that! An English married woman can't call her soul her own for a minute!"

"But," said Mr. Sutcliffe, "would you have been able to call your soul your own if you had married the gentleman who had more debts than your mother liked?"

"Of course, I should have been quite independent. I should have paid his debts and he would have 'ranged' himself. He would never have bothered about my interests, my occupations, my religion. He had the immense recommendation, too, of having no parents. We should have grown into friendship and mutual respect, if he had proved really nice; if not, I should have been still freer. You Englishwomen never understand life and never will."

"Thank heavens," said Mr. Sutcliffe, "they don't!"

She turned on him. "It is because you are so selfish, so comfort-loving, you want such a lot of wrapping up. You must have a woman's heart and soul to wrap round your hearts like a comforter, and then it bores you soon enough. I should despise a man who wanted a wife to be a sort of possession, a sort of moral slave."

"In France women only slave for their brothers," he said.

"They don't, they don't!" she cried angrily.

"There he is, he wants you now," George said, half-shutting his eyes; "he is beckoning to you from the study window."

"He is not," said Marcelle, "and if he did, I should not go unless I chose."

"But you would choose," he said teasingly; "it's of the essence of moral slavery to choose."

Marcelle was really angry now. "One can't make conversation with you without your giving things a personal turn; it's not pleasant," she said crossly. George got up and walked to the study and came back. "The Count's eyes are aching, and he would be very grateful if you would read to him for a little while." He bent over her in a most provoking way as he spoke.

"I will go," I said, jumping up.

"You have read yourself hoarse, Miss Fairfax. Besides, it's a bit of French he is in need of, for something he is writing."

Marcelle rose with dignity. "How childish you are! Of course I would rather read to him than sit out here wasting my time trying to entertain you two visitors." She walked off slowly, still knitting, to the house.

"And what talent are you decided to possess?" Mr. Sutcliffe said to me as we were left alone. I felt cross at his teasing of Marcelle. I did not answer. "You needn't tell me unless you like," he went on, "because I know already. 'Miss Fairfax will do the fiction,' he told me this morning when we were discussing the review. 'She will run one serial novel about the length of a small volume.'"

"Did he really?" I was startled. "I hope he was joking," I said. "I have only written one or two wretched little stories."

"Well he has read the one you gave him and made up his mind. The Count has spoken." He said it almost irritably. "Do you suppose," he went on after a moment's silence, "it would be intruding to go and listen to the bit of De Maistre they are reading?"

"I would not just now; she is angry," I said; but he left me, and having lit a cigarette he walked up and down the terrace outside the study window until it was time for dinner. Dinner was early, as he had to catch the train from the North at eight o'clock at a junction some way off. Marcelle was ashamed of having been so easily irritated. At dinner she was very sweet and friendly.

"I don't believe he has to do so much at his home," she said, smiling at George. "It is that he wants to get away from here."

"I protest," he answered, "against both statements. I have a lot of work, and I'm not getting it done here, but I hate going away all the same." He spoke with the simplicity of a schoolboy, and a little silence followed. After dinner we lingered in the garden, and as Marcelle went to inquire about the dog-cart, and the Count to do up a parcel of

MS. he wanted the departing guest to take with him, Mr. Sutcliffe and I were left alone.

"Have you consented to be editor of the review?"

"No, I've not, and I'm not sure I shall. It's a difficult business. I do feel, have felt for ages, the need of one; but the question is whether d'Etranges would give me an absolutely free hand. I must take time to think it over, for I should hate to refuse. When do you go home?"

"On Monday."

"Must you?"

"Yes, I must. My sister is going to the seaside with our governess, and my mother will be alone."

"It's a pity," he said, "you have done her a world of good. She ought to be young and happy with girls of her own age. She lives in too much strain; he is enough to wear out anybody. As Father Duly says, 'that great hungry soul of hers is too much for her.' I wish you could stay with her." I thought his voice shook a little.

"I suppose she wouldn't have time to stay with me for a bit," I said.

"No, no, she would not leave him, but I hope you will come again soon. I shall come back when I can." He gave a sigh. "But I must do my own work. Between them there is no room for work here; one loses one's own individuality, and one gets nothing done."

We were standing on the terrace, and I heard the dog-cart come round and saw the others coming towards us. He threw away the end of a cigar he was smoking, and held out his hand to say good-bye.

"You look tired," he said; "perhaps it's as well for you you can't stay; but," and he laughed with an effort at cheerfulness, "you won't find it easy to go away from here."

VIII.

How did the time pass before I again visited Marcelle? I can hardly tell. They were weeks spent in feverish intellectual excitement and, I fear, of little interest in home matters. I began my first novel, and what I think now to be my only good one. It is not an uncommon thing for a truthful, mediocre novelist to do best at the start. Then I had a correspondence to carry on with the Count, who never neglected what he had once taken in hand. I see now how carefully he trained me and how much I owed to his kindness. It was an enormous advantage on the intellectual side alone that the Count's method of teaching was so constructive. I do not know how far I was a better woman for the intellectual keenness he put into my religion—I cannot judge. But I do know that if I am ever in the least what I ought to be, and see things as God meant me to see them, I shall ever prize not less, but more, the gradual building up on brain and imagination and fancy of the whole view of life and of the spiritual kingdom of the Church that Paul gave me. No one ever made me realise the joy of being a Catholic as keenly as Paul did. However, I quite see and acknowledge a danger in such mental expansion unless the whole character is developed in proportion.

About four months after my first visit I got a second letter from Marcelle.

"My dearest," she wrote, "it is exciting and interesting to the last degree. The Bishop is coming to pay us a visit.

Do come and support me. I am also writing to Mr. Sutcliffe. I suppose you know that Father Colnes is the new priest at M——, only eight miles from here, and I am asking him to come for a few days to meet the Bishop."

My mother, who was half-glad at the fresh interest in my life and half-alarmed at my absorption in my new friends, gave me a nervous permission to accept the invitation.

Soon afterwards I was back at Peak Hall ; having tea with cakes, and plums, and wasps, on the terrace by the river. Mr. Sutcliffe and the Count were sitting on the low wall, and Marcelle and I on garden chairs by the table.

It was a brilliant day in early autumn ; the air was scented and full of peace, of a rich sentient peace that might have been almost a weight if a light breeze touched with a suspicion of frost had not sharpened the appetite to enjoyment with the fear of the coming winter.

Before long the Count and I began to walk up and down the terrace. It seemed we had much to say, and I felt at once that curious activity of mind which makes discoveries in ourselves, so that we produce unexpected thoughts out of back cupboards in our brains. Was it my young vanity which made me think so, or was it true that I was almost brilliant when I talked with the Count ?

George Sutcliffe still sat on the wall and Marcelle was knitting in her chair. Once, as we passed, I heard him say : " So you both could get on quite as well without me ? Then it is awfully kind of you to ask me."

" Yes, it is. I am a very kind person." A low laugh followed us.

How intimate, how comfortable we four were that evening ! There was a sort of glow of enjoyment about us. So much of the deeper things of friendship seemed taken for granted. Something on our second meeting had suddenly quickened things for us, it seems to me, looking back. But so it often is in an acquaintance started in enthusiasm.

The second meeting is the test, and if it stands that test it will most likely go on at a great pace.

"Ah, but the comfort of seeing you again," Marcelle cried to me, as we met on the staircase before dinner, "and you *do* like my Greek tea-gown—simple, austere, not ugly, eh? And the sweet little thing, how nice it looks in white." She put her arm in mine, her cheeks were glowing. "You do make life brighter and better, you true friends."

Marcelle had been bent on grand preparations for the Bishop, which resolved themselves, as far as I can remember, into our working desperately hard on the morning of his arrival to finish new curtains for the yellow bedroom to replace the faded magenta. Everything which could be done for the chapel she had done long ago, and she had found her attempts at dressing the school children unpopular with the independent northern parents. We finished the curtains which were a beautiful colour, but of a horrid stiff material, before luncheon; we held out our sore and pricked fingers to show George Sutcliffe how we had suffered, as he came into the drawing-room. He looked at mine, or pretended to, and then turned to Marcelle.

"Yours have no scratches," he said, "you haven't worked half so hard."

"Why, I have done more than half," she cried, "only I know how to hold my needle. But *tiens*, here is one scratch and it *is* so sore." She held out her hand like a small child. A little smile came over his face as he took it and bent to examine the scratch. "I can't find it," he said. Something made her jump up roughly, snatch away her hand and move to the window.

"It's a pity, the Bishop is sure not to notice them," he said mockingly.

"We don't want him to notice the curtains," said Marcelle, in the voice of an angry child; "we did not work for that."

"What's the use of beautiful things except to be looked

at?" His voice had a quite teasing tone in it. I heard Marcelle's foot stamp, but I did not look towards her.

"What a silly argument!" she exclaimed. "Are you not going to have any luncheon to-day?"

In the afternoon we decided to take a long walk to prepare ourselves for the Bishop. Marcelle had a hidden romance of her own about a great ecclesiastic, oddly blended with an external anti-clericalism.

I could neither be nervous nor excited about anything so familiar as a Bishop, nor could Mr. Sutcliffe.

"*Ma mère est un peu dévote*," she said, as we climbed the moor some way behind the men, "and *mon père* was *bon chrétien*, but he did not care for priests. I have never seen a Bishop since I was confirmed in the Madeleine, such a grand affair! Will he arrive in a mitre in the dog-cart?"

"Don't talk nonsense all the time," I said rather crossly.

"No, I know I'm silly to-day. Tell me something." She stopped just above me on the path. I can see her now, her red Tam o' Shanter and her dark green plainly-made gown. Her hair was blown about her face and she was blushing, and I blushed too as she went on speaking. "Tell me," she said, putting one hand on my shoulder firmly for a moment, "when you were here before, and last night, did you think I was doing what you call in England to flirt?"

She turned her back on me at the last word, and I had to walk quickly to pick her up. As I reached her she said in a calm philosophic tone. "Anybody in England may flirt. You just flirt to amuse yourself and the other one for a couple of years. It does no harm, it brings no consequences, but you are so stupid, Lisa—you blush and notice and blush again—you exasperate me! Why can't you be like the other girls in England? What is it you don't like? Do you want to flirt with him yourself? You flirt with Paul, won't that do?"

I sat down abruptly on a tuft of heather and let her go on

walking and talking until she should find out that I was not with her. I put my face in my hands and laughed as I saw from her shoulders that she still supposed me to be just behind her. I felt disposed to shake her well, and then kiss her and tell her not to be a goose. Like to flirt with him myself indeed! No, I didn't want to flirt with George Sutcliffe, oh no, certainly not. I should be very, very glad for these friends of mine to love each other and be happy. It felt as if my thoughts were a prayer, and if in that prayer there was an element of sacrifice, I can say truly now that it was an unconscious one. I had only sat still for a moment, and meanwhile Marcelle had discovered two things—first, that she had been giving way to temper without me to hear, and secondly, the presence of an auditor close at hand. Sitting on the heather a few yards from the track which we had been following was a stranger; he looked almost young in spite of his grizzled black hair. He had very straight, well-proportioned features and a weather-beaten complexion. It was not a mobile face except for the very luminous eyes. The eyes were laughing now, and there was an evident effort at repression about the mouth. He had been bare-headed, but as Marcelle's astonished eyes fell upon him, he raised an ecclesiastical hat from the heather beside him, put it on and took it off in a very graceful, courteous bow. He rose as he did so; in his hand was a breviary, and the sunshine glinted from the large stone in the ring on his right hand.

It was the Bishop!

"Is it Mademoiselle d'Etranges?" he asked. I think he had heard her speaking French to herself a moment before.

She was quite silent. I think she was wondering how she ought to greet him.

"*Mais oui*," she said at last, a little awkwardly.

I came forward. "It is the Bishop, Marcelle," I said, and I kissed his ring with the air of one who knew how to behave.

I don't think Dr. Dale meant his manner to be cold, but as we walked down the moors together he certainly had a repressive effect. And during dinner it was the same. The spiritual look in his eyes seemed to be a thing apart, a jewel set almost irrelevantly in an unsympathetic personality. I think he was a little shy and uncertain of his company, and the curious grandeur of Paul's air of immense respect did not put any of us at our ease.

Of course, the Bishop did not guess at the childlike, eager preparations for his visit that Marcelle had made. If there had been a confirmation, or anything definite to make the visit an event, he would have had something to notice. As it was he naturally did not suspect the unusually elaborate dinner, the new altar cloth and the curtains in his room to have been especially prepared for him.

It was natural that he should feel the curious, intellectual atmosphere uncongenial. Dr. Dale was a man whose work was almost entirely active and administrative, whose joys were in the spiritual life, and whose recreations were those of the son of a sporting squire, who, if he no longer actually shot, still got some fishing when he could, and loved the moors as a mountaineer loves his mountains. I am sure he was suspicious of us all at the first, and when a man possesses a certain gift of spiritual magnetism, and Dr. Dale undoubtedly did possess that gift, he is always uncomfortable and difficult to deal with if he feels himself in an uncongenial atmosphere.

Besides such general reasons there was a more definite cause for the Bishop's discomfort, which was afterwards explained to me by Father Duly. In intellectual matters Dr. Dale leant very much on his Vicar-General, Canon Markham. Canon Markham was a Scotchman, who had been a lawyer. In philosophy he had become a scholastic of a rigid type, all the more rigid because he was greatly self-taught, and had not "rubbed minds" much even with other

scholastics. The Canon, it seemed, had of late more than once warned Father Duly of the great dangers of Paul's line of thought. But just before the Bishop came to Peak Hall there had appeared in a German review patronised by Canon Markham very severe strictures on an article lately published in France by the Comte d'Etranges. The Bishop's ears had hardly lost the sound of the icy legal tones in which the Canon had translated the most severe passages against his host at Peak Hall before he set off. However, he was too manly and too charitable to remain happy in the attitude of condemnation, and he was only too glad to leave such questions to the specialists.

I can't remember how the ice first broke between Dr. Dale and Marcelle. His sense of humour was first touched, and then some simple, matter-of-course story which revealed her work among the poor went straight to his heart. His whole manner changed; it became paternal where it had been ceremonious, and even the lithe, active figure lost its unnatural stiffness. Then his natural impulsiveness, from which we were to suffer in the future, did the rest. He had come to Peak Hall, stiff and shy, and he went away having forgotten his suspicions, and for some time remembered only how he had there met and recognised a woman with a curiously spiritual nature, who made some inarticulate, almost dumb appeal to him to help her. I can't remember what they said. I am sure their chatter was a very surface thing. I don't know when I came to feel in their presence a curious sense of the intercourse of the human souls beneath; one, anxious and troubled, seeking from the other a strength, light and peace she could recognise, but had not obtained. Marcelle drank at one of God's inexplicable fountains during those two days. From time to time such things do happen to the Marcelles of this world. I do not mean that a life-long tie is necessarily formed. Only deep sometimes is allowed to call to deep, and there is a

foretaste and foreknowledge of a soul's destiny perceptible to the inward eye of a true pastor. Marcelle was not one moment alone with Dr. Dale, she had nothing to express to him, there was no mental intercourse. If she had tried to speak to him, I am sure it would have been a failure.

After dinner the first evening, she and I walked out on the terrace. We were silent for a moment, then she put her arm into mine saying: "I was not nice this afternoon. I've not been nice for several days, though you may not have found it out. The Bishop's visit must be a new start. He must be holy, I think very holy, from the look in his eyes. I have been trying to find out from Father Duly more about him; he says he thinks he was always holy; he was ordained two years earlier than usual just because of his goodness, and no one doubted that he would be the next Bishop—and Lisa, the poor simply adore him, and they crowd to hear him preach although he can't preach at all well, and the children in Leeds are always holding on to him and following him about although he says very little to them, and speaks quite gravely. I wish I could help being shy with him, and I hate the kissing of his ring and those things. It is childish in me, is it not, Lisa?" A moment's pause, then, "You did not hear those nasty things I said in a temper this afternoon, did you?"

"Not all," I answered, and she wisely pretended to be satisfied. "But why, Marcelle, do tell me why you pretended not to hear when Mr. Sutcliffe spoke to you at dinner?"

"Oh, I don't know. I mean I *do* know, but I can't say, Lisa. I think the Bishop will pray for me, don't you?" And not another serious word could I get from her that evening.

IX.

I WAS copying, of course for the Count, on the following morning when a shadow was thrown from the long window, and Mr. Sutcliffe came in from the terrace with a darkened countenance.

"Where is everybody?" His voice sounded like a growl.

"Marcelle and Father Duly are taking the Bishop the round of the cottages; and the Count is talking with Father Colnes who has just arrived."

"Did you ever see anybody so changeable or with such a power of making herself odious?" He was standing by the table and glaring down at me.

"Poor Marcelle!"

"Why poor Marcelle?" There was an involuntary tenderness in the muffled thunder.

"Well, I think she suffers in some way I don't understand."

He smiled. "People who give way to temper generally do suffer. You need not point out the personal bearing of that remark, I am quite aware of it."

I looked up and laughed as I met his eye with a ludicrous sense of his own anger in it. He moved restlessly. "Well, go on," he said.

"What with?" I answered surprised.

"With what you were saying."

"Oh, about Marcelle?"

"Yes, about Marcelle," he murmured to himself, "quite so,"

"Well, last night when she came to my room, she had been crying——"

"Did you notice how odious she had been to me all the evening?" he interrupted me.

"Of course I did," I said wearily.

"And at breakfast this morning?"

"Yes."

He sat down on the arm of a chair and began to whistle.

"I think she's upset about something, and that was why she was crying last night, and so silent at breakfast."

"Silent? Why, she chattered away to the Bishop, and as for crying, it is an exercise she particularly enjoys."

"Oh dear, how shall I get my work done?" I sighed, but he paid no attention.

"Do you know what her tears are worth? You weren't here when her dog died; she was in a tempest of tears, so I went out for a walk to leave her discreetly alone. When I came back she was playing with the gardener's hose and screaming with laughter. 'Don't talk of Fritz,' she cried out, 'and don't look so solemn, I can't be sad for always; I've dug him a beautiful grave, and I have prayed heaps of prayers for what soul there was of him. It was too tragic, let us talk no more of it. Now do own it, Miss Fairfax, she is heartless; candidly, hopelessly heartless.'"

"It is absolutely and entirely untrue!" I cried angrily.

"You will agree with me some day," he said, getting up and going to the window; "and for the present I will leave you alone, or the Count may not be pleased with you."

He shrugged his broad shoulders, gave an aggravating smile and disappeared.

He must have seen Marcelle coming along the terrace, for she was in the room a moment later.

"You were talking to George Sutcliffe!" She sat down as she spoke in a deep arm-chair, drew off her Tam o' Shanter, then began ruffling up her black hair above her forehead.

"I love that Bishop," she said, "he is a great help. What were you talking about with George Sutcliffe?"

"Marcelle, I *must* work, do leave me in peace."

"Paul works you too hard."

"I like it, but I wish you would be quiet."

"Paul has no mercy; he is not a man, he is not human, he is a vital force. He uses one up and he doesn't mind. But look, look!" She sat up and pointed with a pencil she held in her hand.

"What is there to see?"

"It is the Bishop and George Sutcliffe walking together. I think they are talking of Paul—I am sure they are. The Bishop is questioning and Mr. Sutcliffe is reassuring him. See how eagerly he is talking, he is very useful to Paul——"

"Good Heavens!" I said, turning upon her angrily, "is Paul the only person, the only thing that matters in the world?"

"Dear me," said Marcelle, "I thought I was abusing Paul, and you defending him. Why won't you tell me what you and George Sutcliffe were talking about?"

"Because I don't choose to."

She came and stood opposite to me. "And you don't choose to because it was about me. Well now, Lisa, if he abuses me to you, you just tell him he is perfectly right. Tell him I've an odious temper and no heart, only a few amusing sensations. Do you see, Lisa, do you see? It'll be true, true, true, and the kindest thing to us both——"

I did not look up. I read aloud as I went on copying:—

"If the standpoint of the individual is too much insisted upon, it is almost impossible to take a cosmic——"

Marcelle jumped up and shrieked and put her fingers to her ears. "In mercy spare me Paul's awful, hideous abstractions to-day. I won't listen, I will do something to stop you."

I tried to go on, but she rushed to the piano and drowned

my words in a deafening crash of chords. I was relieved, I thought she would be quiet now. Gradually the music grew softer, and presently she began to sing—a little German hymn, homely and simple. I was able to work then until the music struck another note and Marcelle was singing:—

Entreat me not to leave thee
Or to depart from following after thee,
For whither thou goest I will go, and
Where thou lodgest I will lodge.
Thy people shall be my people, and
Thy God my God.
Where thou diest I will die, and there shall I be buried.
The Lord do so to me and more also
If aught but death part me and thee.

I was entranced. There was a simple sense of greatness, of love, of triumph in the clear contralto notes.

For whither thou goest, for whither thou goest.

A faint shadow made me look round and see George Sutcliffe leaning against the wall, looking through the window. I could not see her face, but I knew that he could. I am sure he did not see me. The face framed in the open lattice window was in shadow, but it was very distinct. There was an eager brightness most full of reverence in the eyes and a half-smile on the mouth. I was young and romantic, and perhaps that was why he looked to me so strong, so tender, so unconsciously masterful, and so consciously humble. I see now that I read there one of those moments of character-making—too rich of promise for fulfilment in this short life. Like the complete hopefulness of a child, such richness was chiefly an intimation of immortality. But in a moment came the jar of mortal fret and friction. She saw him and stopped abruptly.

“Tell us, tell us,” she cried, “was he talking about Paul? Did you reassure him that Paul is no heretic?”

“We did not mention your brother,” said George, turning

away ; and then, looking into the room again, " I forgot, the Bishop did ask me where the Count got his cigars."

During the course of that day the Bishop saw everything and everybody ; talked French ecclesiastical politics with the Count, and recalled with him their visits to Rome. I thought that the Count enjoyed dwelling on his friends in high ecclesiastical places in France—not without a purpose. But most of the time the Bishop was going about with Marcelle seeing the people in the cottages, or talking to the school children. He seemed to be endlessly amused by her chatter, which to me sounded feverish and strained, and the more she chattered the sadder I became.

George Sutcliffe had ridden over to the nearest town for something he wanted, or professed to want, and did not reappear till dinner-time. Father Colnes came to dine and sleep and meet the Bishop. Father Colnes now belonged to this diocese, and had lately been appointed to a mission about eight miles from Peak Hall.

The dinner was as gorgeous as the servants could make it, in honour of the Bishop, and the table groaned under a medley of French and English food provided by them. The Count looked infinitely patient, George Sutcliffe studiously indifferent and a little amused. Father Duly, whom by some curious twist of the Episcopal mind, the Bishop—although he had the highest opinion of him—had elected to snub, was subdued, and Father Colnes, who disliked authorities as such, was nervous. It ended in our all asking and guessing riddles in a time-honoured, clerical manner. Marcelle's childish element came out in her genuine enjoyment, until at last she amused most of us into sharing it.

We sat in the drawing-room after dinner as the night was too chilly to go out of doors. When the men joined us, George and Paul were speaking to each other in low tones. " Yes, it would come more naturally from you," Paul said, as they passed my chair. " Now or later ? "

"Now, while they are here, Marcelle is prepared," was the answer.

The Bishop had seated himself near Marcelle with some genial allusion to a story she had failed to understand at dinner. He had the kindly, rather thin smile of one who habitually tries to take as recreation the little social actions that are in reality a bore to him. George walked across and leant his broad shoulders against the mantelpiece. Father Duly and Father Colnes began a game of chess near the window.

"I wonder," said George, in his genial big voice, "what your lordship would feel about a project that is greatly interesting the present company?"

The Bishop gave one quick, alert glance from George, whom he evidently liked, to the pale face of the Count, who was sitting upright in a stiff-backed oak chair, looking as if the little wood fire was a failure as far as his thin person was concerned.

"What sort of a plot is it?" he asked, laughing kindly, but settling his purple cassock more neatly over his knees, and touching his pectoral cross before he crossed his hands upon them. He looked conventionally handsome as the firelight and the candle-light flickered on him.

"It is A.M.D.G.," said the Count, and his voice growled a little, the effort of courtesy hardly concealing a certain impertinence.

The Bishop did not seem to hear.

"It is," said George, plunging morally into the gulf between the two others, "that I am thinking of editing a review dealing with intellectual subjects of international interest."

"I suppose," said Dr. Dale, still smiling and looking directly at George, "my approval would depend on the contents."

"Obviously," said George, and we all laughed except Paul, Father Duly especially.

"I did not quite catch that," I heard Father Colnes say. "Check to your queen," answered Father Duly.

"And," continued the Bishop, this time looking first at Paul and then at George, "frankly, would you much mind if I did not?"

"Yes," said George earnestly, "very much indeed."

I thought that a light jumped into those curious, spiritual eyes of Dr. Dale. "Then explain, please," he said.

George did explain, and what he explained by a true instinct was not the state of the intellectual field and the desired gain to the cause of truth, but the spiritual needs of the sceptical, the unbelieving, the unconscious pagan, and the Christian consciously loosing his hold on the bread of life. He told, by a manifest effort over himself, which added unconsciously to his intensity, without names or details, the story of Professor Telles and his wife. The Bishop was manifestly troubled; unbelief was to some extent realised by him in the rough forms it is met with in our manufacturing towns, but among personal friends and social equals it had scarcely crossed his path. Prayer and fasting and the oblation of himself to God were the methods with which he had met all sin known to him, and of these he had not been sparing; there was a curious wasted look in his active figure that bore testimony of this. Then too, he believed that great work was being done by theologians, and many questions had still to be settled in Rome. He himself had secured for his own busy Leeds, in Canon Markham, a man of great reading and acute intellect, who had demolished, he understood triumphantly, many of the scientific arguments of Huxley and Darwin in open disputation in the Town Hall.

But that these laymen, suspected by many of being far from orthodox, should come forward in print, and come forward essentially as Catholics, and in his own diocese to meet these evils, was alarming. But that they should base their reasons for doing this on such awful revelations of evil

among souls of pagan lives without any other help, that there should be such a ring of intense conviction in George's tones, and that one or two deep notes of sympathy as to this very longing to help souls should come from the pale, unfriendly Count himself, was even more disturbing. He was in fact experiencing all the surprise of a man who has formed notions of men from a distance and is confronted with the actual, while at the same time his passionate paternal love of souls struck in a true chord with George's earnest zeal. "And so," said George at length, "we would, without venturing to pronounce on disputed questions, allow these people to see that Catholics do face them fearlessly, and are not burying their heads for fear of disillusion." He paused, and there were several moments' silence.

"Check mate, no, not mate. You can take my bishop."

I thought Father Duly anxious to leave the matter between the Bishop and the two laymen without clerical interference.

It was one of the longest silences, or it seemed so to me, that I have ever sat through in company. Then the Bishop, first glancing courteously at the Count and looking for one moment up to George's rugged face, spoke in a low voice and slowly as if choosing his words.

"I think," he said, "if I encourage you as your Bishop, I shall be undertaking to judge as your superior, of what as a man is not sufficiently known to me."

There was no aggressive humility about this. He seemed to say: "You have your department of action, I have mine; the difficulty lies in the fact that I am in some sense your superior, and you ask me to help you."

"You have become specialists," he went on, "in certain branches of knowledge, and that is well; but the thing changes when you come out into the world with your knowledge, because then we are bound to be on our guard for the sake of theology itself, and for the little ones who may not understand. I quite think you might do a very good work,

but I think you must be cautious. There are of course theologians who are quite competent to judge of whether you proceed with enough caution," he paused, and we all held our breath, Father Duly made a clatter with some falling chessmen. George kicked a log down behind him and turned to put it back with the tongs. I was sure that his eye had met Father Duly's and that "Canon Markham" had been plainly written in both faces. I felt a silly inclination to giggle.

George instantly began to speak as he turned round with a face reddened no doubt by the fire.

"I have written to-day to the Bishop of —— and ——," he said, "and my own Bishop at home, who has often wished me to do something of the sort."

"Ah," said Dr. Dale, and he re-crossed his legs with a manifest sense of relief. "You could not do better; your Bishop is a man of sound judgment, and knows his theology."

Paul flung back his head in a movement I knew by now to be one of amused impatience, and I trembled. The Bishop in question was, according to him, hopelessly old fashioned. George looked at him a little sternly and spoke again at once.

"I have not asked my Bishop, as I don't think it would be fair to do so, to undertake any responsibility; but I thought it would be only right to tell him all about it, and I wished very much to enlist his sympathy in our work; but of course we might say and do things as mere laymen that might become far too important if backed by Episcopal authority; the pioneer must, to a certain extent, act on his own initiative."

"Yes," said the Bishop a little quickly, "but he must therefore be prepared for blame as well as sympathy from superiors."

"Afterwards," said Paul, and his voice seemed charged with electricity.

"Afterwards may be too late," said Dr. Dale sternly.

"But you would, *n'est-ce pas?*" put in Marcelle, in a low

gentle voice, "allow a good deal of freedom of initiative, my lord."

He turned to her and spoke freely and kindly.

"Honestly, Mdlle. d'Etranges, the matter is simply bristling with difficulties. I personally wish that very many of these questions could be discussed in Latin only, and by specialists. I do see that the specialist in all departments should work as freely as possible—where a man knows his subject he is not often hasty in his conclusions. But I do dislike this work being done in public, because the irresponsible middleman hands out to the public, things utterly unprepared and unfit for them. Only, Mr. Sutcliffe has told us to-night that so much evil is already accomplished, so many souls are being lost to any Christianity, that he and the Count have won my sympathy in a new way. I see and respect the spirit in which you would work so much, that I am ready to go as far as I possibly can in that sympathy. You do not ask my formal approval," he went on, speaking directly to Mr. Sutcliffe, "and in one sense the fact that some of you live part of the year in my diocese is not enough to make me responsible. I take it that, beyond saying 'I wish you well,' I shall not be quoted or considered to be involved in your venture. The greatest anxiety a bishop can know, the greatest pain, is when he seems to see that to help souls in one direction is to endanger those in another. I have always believed that to guard the faith of the little ones of Christ is a greater duty than to convince a scribe of righteousness. The more helpless the individual sheep the more responsible is the shepherd," he paused. "I should suggest," he said presently, "and I should wish, as far as I may express a wish, your review to be expensive; it would then still be within reach of the cultured and less likely to come into quiet, unintellectual houses. I think it is late, Mdlle. d'Etranges, may I retire, and would half-past six be too early to say my Mass? You know I have to be

in Leeds by nine o'clock. Good-night, God bless you!" and I thought his smile to Marcelle was tender and a little sad. The other good-nights were said rather gravely, and the Bishop's active form was gone. For a moment after the door closed there was silence. Paul's head had fallen forward on his chest and he was looking moodily into the fire.

"And those are the sort of men we have to look to," he said.

"And how could we look to anybody better?" Marcelle flared up, and then with a Frenchwoman's confidence in her own decisions, she said more calmly: "That is a real pastor, what in an English shop you would call the genuine article".

"I thought it went very well, I must say," George said to me, as I happened to catch his eye.

"Not one word about the interests of truth, no notion of duty to thought, no real sympathy beyond counting heads." Paul had turned to Father Colnes to work off his irritation.

Marcelle put down her knitting and got up with a gesture of despair.

"It was souls he wanted to keep," she muttered to herself, and she gave a little stamp on the oak floor. "Come to bed, Lisa,"—anybody would have supposed it was with me she was angry.

Father Duly had walked across to George.

"We were within an ace of Canon Markham as censor," he said. "You were only just in time."

"Next time I have a difficult job in hand," Mr. Sutcliffe smiled at me, "may not Father Duly be present?"

"What did I do but play chess?"

Paul meanwhile rose and gave me a ceremonious good-night as if he had never seen me before in his life, and then turned to Father Colnes, and as I left the room I heard his voice going on:—

"Just tolerated. How could any man fight with nothing but suspicion. No wonder we are a scorn to those that pass by in the onward march of the ages—no wonder——"

I heard no more. A moment later I was in the tiny chapel. And there, kneeling on the tiled floor of the sanctuary without support, was the upright form of the Bishop—the light through the red glass of the sanctuary lamp shining on the hair where it was turning from black to white. Something in that form seemed to teach prayer by its very bearing. I knew from Mr. Sutcliffe that he had not left the chapel till one o'clock the previous night, and still later I had heard him moving in the room next mine, and then had come strange, quick sounds. I had listened for a moment breathless. Yes, he had been using a discipline ; it was the quick sharp sound of a scourge !

To-night I felt by instinct that the prayer, after the talk we had just listened to, would be longer and the scourging sharper.

My sympathy was all with Paul, the forlorn fighter for truth, not understood, even suspected by the very men who ought to have been the first to appreciate him. But would Paul, with all his understanding of the great things of the mind, understand this folly of the cross ?

Marcelle did not come to my room, but she stopped me in the passage.

"See," she said, "what the Bishop has given me."

It was a copy of the Little Office of Our Lady, and in it was written: "Commit thy way unto the Lord and He will bring it to pass". Something choked me as I looked at it. Was the Bishop unconsciously helping her towards some great mistake—some unasked, perhaps unblessed, sacrifice ?

It was dark and cold as we came down to the chapel at six next morning. There was nobody down but myself and Marcelle when we went to lay out the vestments, except the Bishop, who was kneeling at his *prie-dieu* in the sanctuary. The smallness of the chapel, the darkness, the absence of congregation, the three priests in succession offering sacrifice made on me a deep impression. It was the lowliness,

the loneliness and the loftiness of what was going on that exalted me. The Bishop said the first Mass. I had been late the morning before, and had only heard from Marcelle that the Bishop's Mass was wonderful. It seemed as if the spiritual nature, at other times hidden, triumphed, and was let loose. How he gloried in the *Gloria* ! What a complete action of body, mind and spirit went along with a silvery enunciation of the words. Only lately, a short time before I began to write these recollections, a very little while before he died, when he was already weak and suffering, his Mass was still the same, although the movements were very slow. His bearing was altered and weakened, but he still seemed to me as a silver shaft filled with spiritual light.

He had, in the years that intervened, been much criticised ; had made many obvious mistakes ; had no doubt had errors of temper, as well as of judgment. He might still have to be tried in the fire even after this life was past. But, oh my God, how I prayed during that last Mass (for it proved to be his last) that Paul d'Etranges, George Sutcliffe, Marcelle and I might in Heaven not be far off from that pure soul, which had given us so much suffering during that short time when our four lives were much affected by his mistakes and his purity of intention.

An hour after he had said his Mass he was giving his blessing to the assembled household on the steps of the hall.

"And what do you think of the Bishop's visit?" asked Father Duly, as he and I happened to be standing together after the dog-cart had driven off.

"It was very nice, but there isn't much to think about it, is there?"

"Well, what I think is, that his lordship was much more interested in the soul of the Count's sister than in the danger of the Count's philosophy. The visit has made an excellent impression on his lordship."

I was surprised at the seriousness of Father Duly's tone.

X.

THE Count's principal occupation for the next morning was the annexing of Father Colnes. As I sat in the drawing-room I could catch sentences from the Count, and occasional interjections or questions from Father Colnes or Father Duly, as the three paced the wide stone terrace just outside the open window.

The Count was discoursing, and his theme was a world lost in darkness, corrupt and helpless. On the other hand, there was the Catholic Church, rich in treasures of light and thought, the only hope of a faithless world and of the darkened human intellect. The new sciences—physical discovery, the new world of fact revealed in biblical historical criticism—were standing before us, real sciences yet capable of being consecrated or perverted according as their devotees belonged to the faithless world, or pursued them in that high spirit of devotion to all truth, and reverence for the ideal, which belonged to the true genius of the Church. And this led to a scornful invective against the mass of existing Catholics who, in perverse blindness, set aside these treasures as of no account, who instead of preserving the new sciences in the sanctuary of the Church would hand them over to the outer world. Comte's priesthood consisted of the men of science. And the Church too needed a holy band who should combine knowledge with a hold on the undying spiritual truths she had preserved. Yet this was far from being realised. The local authorities he described as too

often blind and self-sufficient, the ordinary theologians as amassing useless knowledge, wilfully crushing the few real intellects who would fain interpret the Church to the world and the world to the Church. "But these survivals of the past," he said, "will fall off of themselves. The new sap is filling the younger and the keener minds. The highest authorities in Rome itself are the people we look to. We must strengthen the hands of the Holy Father, he will need all the support we can give him."

I felt that the Count was thoroughly enjoying himself, and I rejoiced at the enthusiasm of his listeners. I did not at that time tremble at the heady wine that was being poured into the weak brain of Father Colnes. My own mind undoubtedly was being more and more educated in the Count's ideas. My imagination was often oppressed by the pictures he drew of the frightful dangers of modern thought, of the army of thinkers who would scarcely leave faith on the earth. Then there was the other picture, of the ordinary Church authorities, who, according to him, were blind and deaf to what was going on; occupied in minute details of antiquarian thought; hiding their heads, like the ostrich, in the dry sands of past ages, insensible to present danger.

"The time is coming," he would cry, "when the new knowledge will no longer be the possession of the solitary student, but will come out into the busy world and be found on railway bookstalls, on the tables of the club and the messroom."

That was some twenty years ago, and, by the way, yesterday I noted a verification of one part of his prophecy when I saw a sixpenny edition of *The Origin of Species* on a railway bookstall.

After luncheon we sat about in the hall, and the men smoked. It was too wet to go out and cold enough to make a huge fire acceptable. The hall was large and rambling;

it had been the principal living-room in the centre of the house in past generations. It was dark to-day and the tapestry looked ghostly. Marcelle was easily affected by weather ; she looked gloomy to crossness as she sat knitting ferociously in absolute silence—there was something fierce in her silences. She nodded “yes” or shook her head in a forbidding way if I spoke to her. She had relapsed, after the Bishop left, into a most countrified dress—very like what the women wore in the cottages, a thing they particularly dislike to see as a rule. The firelight lit up her face at moments, and played on a picture, as it seemed, of a singularly noble peasant woman, large in pose, high in brow, but of a haughty stomach and not very approachable. Father Duly was enjoying his day’s holiday, entering with a boyish spirit of adventure into the Count’s talk, and intoxicated is the one word for Father Colnes. My own brain was delusively clear and excited, for I was very tired in reality. George Sutcliffe talked as much as the Count, and better than I had ever heard him talk before. I thought he was defiant of the silent knitting figure on the oak settle by the fire.

It was on this dark wet day, with the gaunt figures on the tapestry watching us, that the English branch of the Count’s plot was hatched. It was then that our periodical took definite shape and was christened. It was called the *Catholic International Review*.

No one asked now who would be the editor. George Sutcliffe seemed to have thrown himself intensely into the affair. Then we all decided that the house was no longer endurable, and that it would be tea-time before we were quite sure that we had finished luncheon. So in greatcoats and cloaks—Marcelle’s I remember was blue lined with red—we braved the weather. Outside was more light and less rain than we had expected. We stepped out quickly.

“Ah, *mon Dieu*, what good it does one,” cried Marcelle.

Indeed, the cloud on her brow lifted at once with the physical relief of air and exercise on gaining the spacious moors.

"Faster, Paul," she cried, "we must walk faster."

The wind was behind and seemed to bear us girls on quicker than the heavier men. We ran and Marcelle cried out with joy. At last she stopped quite out of breath, glowing with colour and with life.

"One need not always repress oneself," she cried joyously. "What a comfort to have left those tiresome men so far behind."

A few hours later two humbled, shivering, dripping young women were sheltering under a low, mortarless wall far out on the moors, having completely lost their way, not knowing what hour of the night it might be. I was trying to bear cheerfully the pain of a twisted ankle, so as not to add to Marcelle's vociferous remorse.

"Oh, Lisa, you do not see," she cried. "I was revolting against the ties of our lives, the fetters we make round our own hearts. I wanted to escape, and for a time it was very great and solemn and free on the hill-tops, was it not? That too happens in the moral story; you get what you want, and then nature turns on you and howls and weeps and leaves you no light, no rest, no hope, and then, *chérie*, she tortures you too; only it was *I* who ought to have had the broken ankle, not you."

"It's not broken, or even sprained," I murmured.

"Well, twisted, tortured, if not broken," said Marcelle, who seemed to enjoy piling on the agony. And she went on describing her own conduct. "I was like a naughty child who wanted to get out of the warm nursery where he is made to sit up for meals and have his hair brushed. It makes me ashamed, that after the joy and strength of the morning in the chapel and the Bishop's visit, the demon in me should have woke up so quickly."

I think she was talking on, partly in order to distract my mind. At last she was silent for a moment.

"Lisa, if we have to spend the whole night here, I am afraid you will be really ill," she said presently, "and it will all be my fault."

"That is sheer nonsense," I protested feebly. "I could have refused to go with you, I was a perfectly free agent."

Never shall I forget the joy with which I recognised the sound of the human voice coming fitfully to us through the roaring wind. Then suddenly we heard quite distinctly a shout, not far off, and Marcelle leaped to her feet and screamed her loudest. Then came another and fainter shout, and for one horrible moment it seemed as if they were passing us by. I remember how we both shouted, "George, George!" at the top of our voices. It was another few moments before he heard us. Then we saw a light higher up the hill behind us. We had been right in taking for granted that it would be Mr. Sutcliffe who would find us first. His face was white and drawn and he looked stern.

Marcelle held out both hands to him. "I knew it must be you," she said. "I knew you would do the impossible to find us."

I think he took both her hands for a moment. I could not see his face except in flashes from the lantern.

"Lisa has hurt her ankle," she said, "and it is all my fault."

"You need not tell me that," he growled, "but happily we have brought a pony."

The others came up now. There were Father Duly and two keepers, and one of the little rough ponies belonging to the Hall.

"D'Etranges has followed the river with Father Colnes," said George, as he lifted me up on the pony. "We must send on a boy after them."

Then some stiffish whisky and water was administered to both of us, and dry cloaks were wrapped round us.

"If you will go on with the pony, I will help Mademoiselle d'Etranges," said George in a business-like voice to Father Duly. "Let one of the men go in front with the lantern and the other help you with the pony."

"What is the hour?" Marcelle asked.

"About half-past nine."

"Only that! *Mon Dieu*, imagine the horrors of Eternity! I thought we had been here half the night."

It was the last I heard of them.

I was quite exhausted, and the old keeper more than once put his arm round me to prevent my falling. In spite of the pain of my ankle as the pony shook me up and down, I was almost asleep, but I had moments of consciousness in which to wonder what that night's walk was to Mr. Sutcliffe. Marcelle would be weak and clinging, her sweetest, most childlike self, accepting as an obvious fact the belief that he was to be relied upon. "I know he will do the possible or the impossible," she had said more than once as we were waiting.

His was not a clear-seeing passion; he never judged her quite fairly. He always thought that his love would make him think too well of her, and in trying to keep the balance of his judgment he went the other way. He wanted proof of her gentleness, her sweetness and her heart's capacities. Not that he thought that it mattered much; for nothing altered his longing to be with her, to serve her, to help her. Even the faults he misjudged her to have, only endeared her to him the more. But I resented for her, and resent even now, the way he misunderstood while he worshipped her. Well, that night I know he had a glimpse of her sweet, eager, humble, hungry soul. There were in the darkness and freedom none of the conventionalities she hated and knew so little how to deal with. Her temper, for she had a

temper, was at rest. She let herself go, I think, abandoned herself, greatly because she was so physically tired, to the feelings of the moment. I have often tried to fancy that walk, but though they both alluded to it some months afterwards, the best light that could be thrown upon it was the light that shone on their two faces as they followed us into the lamplight of the hall. I saw the Count, who had got back just before us, give a start, and I noted the genial Irish smile of Father Duly as he turned with an incipient wink to Father Colnes. Then we all talked eagerly for a few moments of what had happened, till we girls were ordered up to hot baths and to bed.

XI.

NEEDLESS to say we had both caught appalling colds. No influenza I have suffered from since ever made my limbs ache as badly as they did after that chill. Marcelle had less pain than I, but more fever. We could not get into each other's rooms for three or four days. The weather was bad, the household though kind, was not quite efficient for illness, and although hospital nurses were to be had twenty years ago, they were still regarded as belonging to more serious cases than ours. Those ought to have been dreary days, but after the first twenty-four hours I was able to read, and I had some splendid things to read—Tolstoi, and Turgenev in French, among others—supplied me by the Count. Presently I made a further effort, and went on to work at the story he wanted for the review. He was right it seemed (in intellectual matters he usually was right); whatever talent I possessed was for fiction. So the days were, for me, far from dull. A little girl from the village was brought in as postman between the rooms. She brought me books and notes from the company downstairs as well as from Marcelle. Most of our notes from downstairs were about the periodical.

“George Sutcliffe has formally consented to be editor,” came in the Count's scholarly hand.

“Dear Miss Fairfax, as your future editor, I insist that writing when you are too weak to get up is absurd, and I shall reject any work so produced, confident of its demerits.

I must tell you that I have kept a perfectly free hand. Nothing regarding faith, morals, or even fiction shall appear unless I approve of it. Let me know what you think of this design for a cover, produced by Father Colnes. Let me know, too, how you think Mademoiselle d'Etranges when you see her."

In fact, in dark November days in my sombre old four-post bed, with still occasional rheumatic twinges in my joints, I got into a whirl of mental excitement. Of course I paid for it later, but, at the time, how I enjoyed it! I enjoyed, too, the sense of comradeship in the house, and the growing expectation of great happiness for my friends. It seemed to me that my own life was to be almost entirely intellectual, and I told myself I was glad of it. Certainly this friendship with George, and Marcelle, and the Count, was strangely exciting.

When I could read no more I lay in bed and dreamed a little, dreams of ambition and success. The Count mingled in these dreams a good deal, and I certainly encouraged his part in them. It was impossible not to be proud of the notice of such a man. I could not help knowing that I attracted him, for once or twice surely he had betrayed an interest in me beyond the question of my utility. But I rebuked my vanity as an unworthy ingredient in such a friendship.

It was five days after our adventure when (tremendously wrapped up in blankets) I ventured, still limping with a weak ankle, down the passage into Marcelle's room. It was a beautiful old corner room, oak-panelled, low and large. A bright wood fire was burning in the wide chimney, and the glowing logs were supported by some splendid old iron dogs. In front of the fire a low table was spread with *café au lait*, Yorkshire tea-cakes and jam. It was drawn up close to a chintz-covered sofa which was intended for me. I felt in high spirits as I took a rest upon it for a moment on

my way to Marcelle's bed. Then I hobbled across the room to a bedstead, even darker, gloomier, handsomer than my own. In the first moment of coming in I had been too cheerful to notice anything depressing in Marcelle's reception of me, but I now realised that this was a very white, small-faced Marcelle who kissed me, and hoped I was better, in a gentle, tired little voice. I took fright at the idea that she was much more ill than I had supposed, but she protested against my fears, and absolutely refused to send for the doctor, who lived a good twelve miles off. To reassure me she sat up in bed and drank the *café au lait* and ate the tea-cakes and became almost cheery. During the next hour we received two notes from the men downstairs, asking after our good health and reporting the work done for the review. Father Colnes' article had been accepted by the editor.

"Why doesn't he go back to his parish?" said Marcelle, a little crossly.

"He is going back to-morrow; he must get back as it is Saturday," I said.

Marcelle sighed. "I wish he had never come," she went on. "He is not our sort; Paul will do him harm, not good. Lisa, I want to talk to you. Don't you think you could lie down on the bed beside me and rest and be near me while I speak to you."

I dragged myself and my blankets across the room and lay down beside her.

"Lisa," she said, in a very low voice, "I have had a letter from my mother, and she makes an idea. It is not English, but we are not English, you know. She says to me, 'Would Miss Fairfax's mother consent to her marrying Paul?'"

"Oh, my dear Marcelle!" I cried, in terrified amazement.

"It surprises you?" she said. "But you know you are very great friends, and Paul would be *enchanté*."

I sat up and covered my face with my hands, and nearly cried with vexation and astonishment.

"Does the Count know of this idea?" I stammered.

"He has not the faintest notion," she answered, to my intense relief. "I wanted to ask you first," her voice was still perfectly calm and matter-of-fact. "And, Lisa dear, if it will not do, you will all the same keep friends with Paul? You do him more good than you know."

I lay back now, hoping that she did not see my face. I realised that we were such miles apart in thought and feeling.

Then in a rather broken voice, with a good deal of emotion, she went on: "I had so hoped—so wished—just these few last days . . . I had thought——"

I put out my hand and touched hers. We had each, then, in our own rooms been planning matrimony for the other.

"He misses you since you have been ill, and he comes in here and talks of you, and he is very curious about your story. Then came the letter from *Maman*, and so I had begun to hope."

I could see she was crying. I felt entirely puzzled.

"But you are sure he has not thought of it?" I queried anxiously.

"Paul would never have so practical an idea of himself, but he has missed you very much."

I felt a little bitter at the idea of the Count missing me. I suddenly realised how I had slaved for him. I knew perfectly well that it was only his private secretary that he had missed.

"He cannot find some of his German papers," Marcelle went on, unconsciously answering my thought, "and he wants you in heaps of things." She gave a deep sigh. "Then it is of no use?"

"To suggest it to the Count? Certainly not," I answered angrily; but she looked so ill and miserable, and so entirely unconscious of having said or done anything to annoy me that I was melted.

"You must have the doctor," I said,

Marcelle gave a little laugh. "I am as well as possible; only, Lisa, I cannot come downstairs now. I cannot, cannot see George Sutcliffe. Let us all go on for a little longer just as we are. When I do see him, you see, *chérie*, he will ask me what I must——" she became silent.

"But Marcelle, why? You do care for him, you know you do," I cried. "Oh, Marcelle dear, do make him happy!"

She looked at me keenly for a moment and then turned to the window.

"Lisa, I cannot leave Paul. I thought if you and he could marry, I could leave him then; but now——"

I jumped up, regardless of the blankets and my poor ankle, and walked across to the fireplace. How stupid I had been, how idiotically intellectual and stupid! The whole thing presented itself to me now as a possibility, but a terrible one. I could make George and Marcelle happy; we should still be a quartette together, united in thought and aim. Whereas otherwise she would break George's heart and her own, and in any case I had had a warning that my intimacy with the Count might be misunderstood. I stood by the fire feeling unutterably saddened. How this household, this little group had worked into my life, and my affections, and had absorbed my interests. Must we break it up? Must I go home to my mother and Mary, and Miss Mills, and lose it all? I was weak still, and the rheumatism in my shoulder burnt and irritated, but I hardly noticed it. It was a fateful error, that mistaken notion of Marcelle's. There was not the least reason in the world why she should not leave Paul. He was perfectly capable of living alone, and if not, why not marry him to somebody else?

I said it to her rather roughly.

"No, no," she said, "he must not be left alone, and there is nobody else he would marry."

The colour mounted in my face. "But it is too absurd, when you allow that he has not even thought of it."

"Yet you know it's true."

Yes, I knew it was true, and I felt cold and giddy.

"But why must you or I give up our lives to him?" I went on half-dreamily.

"Because you or I must save his soul."

"Heavens, Marcelle, you speak as if he were an abandoned sinner."

"It is not that," said his sister, in the curiously dispassionate analysing manner which I knew so well. "He is without vices, but he is singular. He is a great force that has not found its direction. *Il faut qu'il s'oriente*—how do you say it in English? The moral side, the affections are not developed; he holds to all that is good, and to the Catholic religion as he imagines it to be, mentally, intellectually only. It appears to me that he does not pray, he only thinks. For the hope of more, as he is now, he must depend on you or me. But I will not ask you to marry him if you don't like it—*ce serait trop demandé*. I only wanted to ask if there were any possibility. You know his genius, you feel his force. I could have well and happily lived only for Paul. Only now . . . Lisa, you see why I cannot come downstairs."

"You are maddening!" I said. "Can't you see how cruel you are to George Sutcliffe? What right have you to put him into misery, and I daresay temptation, for this morbid notion of Paul's dangers? You analyse yourself crazy. Do the simple thing, and make the man who loves you happy and good."

"He will be good whatever I do; he is a very fine man. It won't hurt him to suffer a little." Marcelle spoke with a quiet smile.

"It is a horrible shame," I cried, "to treat him like this, just because of his goodness! And after *that* night."

"I know," she said humbly. "Ah, how I cried out 'George' in the dark and the rain! I lost my heart, my

head, everything. I would to heaven I could undo it, and yet——”

“You would not really undo it if you could,” I said, growing more and more angry. “He is right, you are horribly heartless.”

“Did he say that?” she asked meekly, and with such a look of pain on the white face that my anger again softened. “You see, Lisa,” she went on, “that day the Bishop came I saw suddenly what was in George’s mind ; and while I was with the Bishop, I was resolved I must be brave and must live, not for myself, but for Paul’s soul. When my father was dying—Paul was then an Atheist, a Materialist—I was going to make my first Communion, and my father said to me, ‘*Ma petite*, you will pray for Paul, a man cannot die without religion’. Well, when I was hearing the Bishop’s Mass I thought of those words. Paul is a Catholic in intellect now, or at least he thinks he is, but he has not got the religion that men should die in, the religion of the heart. So you see, Lisa, I must sacrifice just this beginning of a feeling for George. I meant to do bravely and right, but I broke down so very soon in the darkness out on the moors. Then, Lisa, after two days came mother’s letter, and it seemed to give me a hope ; but no, we will talk of it no more. And now you will understand why I cannot and I will not—*je ne puis voir George*.”

XII.

WE did not get any further with our subject till next day, when Marcelle came into my room in her dressing-gown. It had been a stormy night. I had slept badly, and in the stillness of the night my brain played all possible tricks. I imagined every conceivable possibility to the accompaniment of a loud moaning wind while I was awake, and at last I dreamt—I fancied myself married to the Count against my own wishes, yielding to the cold power of his unconsciously imperious will. He seemed to come, looking more black and white, and more still even than usual. I fancied that he put out one of the long, thin, expressive hands, and that I felt its cool touch on my hair and forehead. He looked at me out of the eyes which always saw further than what he looked at. And he told me to come, not as if he cared much whether I came or not. But I got up and went. I followed him down some long, long path lit by a low sun or a rising moon—I don't know which. But as I followed him, on ground that somehow hurt my feet, I saw down a vista of green hedges (I think they were) into a sunlit corner where George and Marcelle were sitting. I tried to say that I wanted to go to them, and then the figure in front of me turned. He had become very tall, of mighty proportions, and his eyes were like lamps, but very still, with one radiance within the other. And as I pointed to the happy spot which we were passing, he raised a hand and pointed to a vision in the clouds. It was a city on seven hills, and I was looking in it for a great

dome, while I was painfully conscious that he was looking at me, and explaining how we must mount those cold heights of cloud, and leave the others in the garden. I turned and cried to George Sutcliffe to come and save me.

"*Pourquoi cries-tu comme cela ?*" asked Marcelle, and I woke to find her looking at me in surprise. "Do you often dream and scream?" she said. "You were calling George, you must have been dreaming that you were out on the moors."

I laughed. "I've had a horrible night," I said. "Yes, give me coffee, there's a dear. But you ought not to be here."

"You forget that I am only ill because I cannot see George Sutcliffe. Now Lisa, I wonder if you are a good friend, if you could do something for me?"

"I'll try," I said cautiously. I felt her capable of proposing anything, from matrimony with somebody who had never given it a thought, to murder or any other trifling action!

"Let me tell you the position."

"*Analysons donc*," I murmured wearily, and shut my eyes.

"No. Plain facts this time. We are engaged in a work, or works, of some importance, are we not?"

"We are," I said, reminiscent of the Critic.

"We are a bit friends, we care for each other, we four?"

"We do."

"We do not want the *Review* to stop?"

"We do not."

"We do not want to lose George Sutcliffe as editor."

"We do not."

"We do not want Paul to associate with people we cannot trust. We want to keep George Sutcliffe near him, don't we?"

"We do."

"Well then, you see——"

"*Analysons donc*," I said, as she began to count on her fingers.

"No, still facts. One more big fact. If George Sutcliffe proposes to me, all this must happen—we could not go on the same. And as you can't, or won't marry Paul, I can't, or won't marry George Sutcliffe." Her voice did not shake or hesitate; if I had not seen a sad, fierce look in her eyes, I should have wondered if she cared in the least.

"But, after all, you can't help his proposing if he intends to propose."

"Yes, but *you* can."

"Well, really, Marcelle, this is too much! Mr. Sutcliffe has not confided in me. Am I to push myself into his confidence?"

"I don't think it will want much pushing. If you cannot prevent his proposing, you know we must let it happen, and then he is lost to Paul, to our Cause, to you and me as a friend. It is absurd. I cannot after that ask him to come down here constantly. Paul must then agree if he refuses to be editor. *Mais, tiens*, I think I hear Paul calling; he will be waiting for me, and he must not think I am not ill. Oh, do think, Lisa, dear, how we should miss George Sutcliffe! Just tell him, dearest, say you know positively that I cannot marry for ever so long. *Oui, Paul, oui, je viens.*"

She had gone, and I was left to my coffee and my very unpleasant reflections. I felt angry with her, she seemed to me quite intolerable: first making me believe that her happiness depended on my marrying her brother, who had never thought of marrying me, and then expecting me to tell our common friend not to propose to her.

It might make him very angry, it would seem such impertinence; it was intolerable! And yet what she said was perfectly true. If he proposed to her it must mean the breaking up of so many things, of our happy quartette, of our work together for our Cause. Yes, I owned to myself unwillingly, for the sake of the Count and the Cause it must

be prevented. Although I had passed a horrid night I had to acknowledge that I had much less pain. I was perfectly capable of going downstairs, warmly wrapped up. I got up and dressed. I had become suddenly nervous lest George Sutcliffe should write a proposal to Marcelle; then she would have to answer, and he would drive off to catch the next train. This idea got on my nerves, and when a tradesman's cart came round to the door, I looked out in a panic lest it should be the dog-cart, come to take him away. Then suddenly there was the dog-cart! I felt how silly I was; Marcelle had left me barely an hour ago. No, it was for Father Colnes, of course. Soon I saw him come out and with him the Count. The latter was talking earnestly, and Father Colnes was listening. They stood for nearly ten minutes by the dog-cart, oblivious of all things, and I began to think that Father Colnes would miss the train. Once the Count put his hand for a moment on the other's shoulder. It was the gesture of a kind superior to a disciple. I felt a touch of the excitement belonging to our enterprise and the pride in our leader's influence.

But time was passing. I wanted to get down and give myself a chance of catching George before he went to work in his own room.

I felt a poor thing as I drew a chair near the fire in the untidy drawing-room which showed traces of Marcelle's absence and the occupation of four mere men for several days. Nobody knew I was down, and nobody looked in upon me for a long time; then Father Duly came and we had a few cheerful words. He had hardly gone out when Mr. Sutcliffe appeared.

"I've just heard that you are down. Ought you to be here? There is nobody in this house to keep you two in order. How is she?"

"I really think she is ever so much better; but as she was inclined for once in her life to give in, I encouraged it."

"It isn't a very good sign that she should be inclined to give in," he said, a little anxiously.

"Anyhow, the results are excellent," I spoke cheerfully. I rather wanted him to guess that she was in no great hurry to come down and see him. "You know she works too hard, she is looking better for the rest already."

He was standing, a book in his hand, as if he meant to be off to his room. I made a plunge in order to keep him.

"She is not an easy person to understand." I was angry with her and I probably betrayed it in my voice.

"You think not?" he queried in a low, soft tone. He sat down near me now in a big arm-chair and leant back. He was certainly not handsome.

I found myself looking at him from a new point of view. I was wondering how far his actual presence might affect Marcelle. Was the rugged strength of the outdoor Englishman's trained physical development an attraction or the reverse to the sister of the Count, who seemed the merest embodiment of brain and soul? Or did she feel the charm of the kindness and gentleness in the eyes that were a perpetual surprise when Mr. Sutcliffe turned towards you? The forehead and chin were unsympathetic seen in profile, and the eyes, in contradiction to them, made me feel each glance as if it were a quite unexpected and a very pleasing meeting with an old friend.

However it might be, it struck me now that my mission was a mistake; that if I left him and Marcelle to fight it out, perhaps she would give up her strained notions of duty, perhaps the force of the man's love might win her.

I became silent and perplexed, dreadfully distressed as to what I had better do. Mr. Sutcliffe decided the question by pulling two letters out of his pocket.

"I had just written you a note with the reference to Newman that you wanted," he said. Then he hastily put back a larger and thicker letter which he had held in his hand,

but not before I had seen "Mademoiselle d'Etranges" written on it. I felt sure he had written her a letter that would be fatal. Besides, after all, when Marcelle had set her iron will on following what her strange mind had ordered, no more was to be hoped.

"Thank you very much," I said, and then repeated my last remark. "She is very difficult to understand; one seems sometimes to have got the *mot de l'énigme*, and then there is so sudden a transition that one doubts if it is the same person."

"I have been through those stages," he said, gazing into the fire, with a happy, amused smile. Oh, if Marcelle were but here sitting by him, I thought. Surely he was strong and gentle, good and wise. Why could he not be happy? I yearned for happiness for him, but at the same time I began to have a curious feeling that Marcelle would not see in him quite what I saw, and would indeed be able to harden herself against him, however great the effort. She had a fierce power of loyalty, and her loyalty was already pledged to her dead father and to Paul.

Then my pride took fire for my friend. I told myself that I would save him from offering so great a gift where it would be rejected.

Just then the Count passed by the window, his head a little bowed; he did not look in. A sense of awe took hold of me with the sudden remembrance of Marcelle's suggestion of how I could make them all happy if I chose. I might give this friend his longed-for happiness, I might give up my own life. Oh, nonsense, nonsense! My brain must be failing me! And so, in sudden panic fear of the Count, I stumbled quickly into that delicate matter.

"She will never marry or think of marriage," I said, "until he has married." I did not look round. I did not want to see George's face.

"What makes you say that?"

"Please forgive me if I am wrong, Mr. Sutcliffe, and anyhow forgive me, for meddling; but I can't help seeing, thinking—and if I am right——"

"Of course you are right," he muttered to himself, a little bitterly.

"I feel quite, quite sure"—I gazed into the fire as I spoke—"that nothing will lessen her brother's hold on her loyalty to him until——"

"Until what?"

"Until he lessens it himself by giving her place to somebody else."

I had not meant to put it in that way in the least.

"It is partly loyalty to her father's memory, but it is also the Count himself—he has such power over her; if he beckons she must follow, and I can only conceive one case in which she could resist him——"

"And that——?" said George Sutcliffe.

"Would be if he came between her and God. Then she would say, 'Better part here than part at Heaven's Gate—you will get to Heaven in the end, but not I, if I follow you now'."

"Miss Fairfax, this is very interesting, but I want something plainer. Do you mean—it seems almost impossible that you should—but do you mean that I have no hope?"

"No, no," I cried, for his voice was terrible to me. "No, no, only you must wait."

"I would wait all the years a man has ever waited, if she would tell me to wait."

"But I know she won't."

"She won't give me any hope." His voice was business-like now.

"She won't give you any hope."

"But you would give me hope," he concluded.

"I would give you this hope," I said. Oh, dear me, how very young and inexperienced I was! "I should feel sure

that if he married, she would be free—free not only to leave him, but free mentally from his power over her. You see that power would be directed towards somebody else.” I shivered in front of the hot fire.

“But one can’t conceive his doing anything so human. Oh, no, it is utterly hopeless. But can nothing be done, can no one do any good? Is she to sacrifice herself and destroy my life without a finger being raised? My God, what an awful thing is a twisted conscience in a good woman!”

“I am not sure that it is twisted,” I cried eagerly. “She is anxious about Paul, about his soul.”

“Good God,” he said, “and have I not got a soul, a soul that could be damned into a hell that d’Etranges could never dream of?”

He was walking about the room now. In a moment he had calmed himself, and coming back to the fire he threw the letter into it. I covered my face with my hands so as not to see the writing that would be so distinct in the blaze before it was destroyed.

“I see,” he said presently, “you have saved me from a danger; if she had had my letter, everything between us would have been different afterwards. Now I am nominally where I was, and I will do as you tell me. I cannot give up hope. I——”

Then the door opened, and the Count interrupted us.

“I am very glad you are better,” he said absently, as he bowed to me, and then turning to George Sutcliffe he said, “Here is the passage I wanted; shall I read it to you? Will it tire you, Miss Fairfax?”

We both sat with our backs almost turned to him, gazing into the fire.

“Remember,” murmured George to me while the Count was finding his place, “you have brought no message and received none.”

“Yes, yes,” I answered.

It was strange listening to the clear, cool, melodious reading while I tingled with nervous excitement. It was a relief to me. I think it did no harm to George. But long afterwards the Count was astonished to find that we neither of us knew that famous bit of literature.

"My memory must be failing," he said. "I could have sworn that I read it to you both last October, just after Miss Fairfax and Marcelle were ill."

Meanwhile my mother had become nervous about my illness, and wanted Miss Mills to come up and nurse me. I could now gladly say that I should be able to get home in a few days.

George Sutcliffe had decided in his own mind to leave on the Monday. The only further allusion he made to our private talk was when we met in the passage before dinner that Saturday night:—

"I think it is better to go away now," he said to me in a low voice. "I can come back when the first proofs of the *Catholic International Review* are printed."

"I wonder when I shall come back," I answered, rather sadly.

"Why," he said, quite eagerly, "could you not come then too?"

"I am not a free agent," I said smiling. "I doubt if I shall come again for a long time. You see, they will go abroad after Christmas, and once abroad I don't think they will be back in a hurry."

We both stood sadly, side by side.

"If you could but come early in December when I shall bring the proofs?"

"I am sure I can't," I said firmly, but I was touched by his kind look and manner. It was rather quaint that he should be pressing on me an invitation to stay with somebody else. "I don't want to ask my mother's permission again so soon."

Marcelle came down to dinner rather chirpy and excited. The dulness of her room had depressed her, and superficial high spirits rose with the company and the lights downstairs. Once or twice the Count mildly snubbed her. He had been extraordinarily interested about the opening of my story, and talked to me about it during dinner. After the usual music, which was severely classical and impersonal this evening, he made me read it aloud to him. Marcelle half-listened, and expressed delight at something that took her fancy and then went off to bed. George Sutcliffe and Father Duly were smoking in the hall.

I sat near the study table on an upright chair, and the Count leant back listening attentively. I was a little nervous at first. Marcelle's strange proposition would keep coming into my mind. I was very anxious as to his opinion, and as his silence only deepened, my voice grew tremulous. But, as I went on, my interest in my own effort increased, and I forgot my self-consciousness. When I finished I turned towards him for a verdict. He got up and stood looking down at me smiling.

"It is as I thought," he said. "I knew you were an artist. Your work for a beginner is admirable. Now you must be content with nothing but the very best. You must work neither for profit nor for praise, nor directly or consciously for any cause. You have a responsibility in your hands. Every touch of genius must be responsible to itself. You are not to think, how shall I do good? How can I, by thought, or picture, or narrative, help on the cause of truth and light in the world? You are to work for art. God made the artist for art."

I had stood up and drawn nearer to him as he spoke. "But then," I said, "am I not to bring in any of the questions you are working out—am I not to be of any use for the cause of the Church?"

He looked at me with the strange gentleness that some-

times came into the cold face. "Your art, your life, your existence will help most," he said. "What could not help would be to debase art even for the noblest uses. Let yourself, your nearest and dearest thoughts, go into your art and they will reach us. Child, I look for great things from you." As he spoke he laid his hand on my shoulder. It was a light touch, yet to my imagination it seemed too heavy. I could hardly draw my breath as we stood there. He looked taller now that I was so near to him, and in the dim candlelight his eyes shone as they had done in my dream. Had that awful idea been put into his head by Marcelle or his step-mother? Was he going to say something, and if so, what? And what should I say to him? But in a moment I realised that he had not the faintest notion of the kind. He had put his hand on my silk-covered shoulder in exactly the same way in which he had put it on Father Colnes' black-coated shoulder in the morning. But to me it was terrible.

"You will be brave," the clear low voice went on, "you will——" And then, to my untold relief, the door opened and George Sutcliffe put in his head. I fancied he looked surprised and not pleased.

"D'Etranges," he said, "is it too late to discuss one bit in your Renan article?"

"It is just the time," said Paul, removing his hand from my shoulder as unconsciously as if it had been the arm of a chair.

George gave me a stiff "good-night," and I escaped, feeling horribly tired, only to find Marcelle waiting for me.

"You needn't be afraid, you needn't have waited for me," I said angrily. "As I told you this morning, he won't propose. He will keep his trouble to himself, and he will be exceedingly useful to your brother."

Marcelle sat down and cried.

"And," I went on, "I have had a letter from my mother, and I must go home on Tuesday."

"Tuesday? Oh, no, not Tuesday!"

"Yes, Tuesday."

Then Marcelle said, "Yes, if you wish it," very meekly, and moved to go. As she reached the door, she looked so miserable, so lonely, so forlorn, that I ran after her and put my arms round her neck. And we cried together for several minutes.

"You go because of the *sotte* letter of my mother," she said.

"No, because of the letter of my own mother."

But one letter really had as much to do with my leaving Peak Hall as the other.

XIII.

I WENT home next day determined to work hard and not to give in to the depression that had seized hold of me. And for the first few weeks I got on pretty well. I wrote steadily for some hours a day, and, in spite of the dear old local priest's doubts of our capacities, I managed with Mary to start a successful little club for the village girls.

Miss Mills, our old governess, left us next to nothing to do for our mother, making it her whole work and pleasure in life to forestall those little filial duties which it would have been so much better to have left to us.

But when, early in December, I heard that Mr. Sutcliffe had gone to Peak Hall, and that the proof-sheets of the *Catholic International* were under consultation, a horrible hankering after my friends got possession of me. Once or twice I very nearly asked my mother to let me accept the very pressing invitations that came almost daily from Marcelle. My small share of the review, the first chapters of my story, I had finished off and copied out in time. The *International* was in slip proofs, and I could picture to myself so exactly the Count, Mr. Sutcliffe, Marcelle, Father Duly, and probably Father Colnes, sitting discussing them in the hall or study.

Christmas came, and Mary and I went through our usual Christmas ritual, from the Crib in the chapel to the stockings hung at the end of our bedsteads. These things felt to me sad and almost irritating this year. We could not go on

pretending to be babies all our lives. We could not go on living this dull, dull, useless life with women's hearts and women's energies. If I had but known it was our last Christmas at home, how differently I should have felt! What a sacred, tremulous pathos would have been attached to the little surprises for each other, to the hanging of the holly in the drawing-room, to many things that in my then mood seemed so dull and childish. Mary was bright that Christmas; to her the new social developments of the neighbourhood, slight as they were, were an exciting novelty, and she was so good and unselfish that she was not critical of her pleasures. Then we were very lucky in the small group made by two new families of neighbours. They were quite of our own class, very friendly, and with none, or almost none, of the small rivalries and consequent rubs of rather a lower stratum in social life. Yet to me the Newvilles and Darcombes were very, very dull.

"I don't know what you want, I am sure," said Mary, one day during Christmas week.

"I want the d'Etranges," I thought. "I want people with more object in life," I said aloud, "people who care about what is happening in the world at large, and who don't think that they ought to sit waiting for post-cards from friends in Rome to tell them what to think on every conceivable topic."

"Well, I hope you will be civil to their friend from Rome to-night, as it's more than likely that you will sit by him."

We had just come in from skating on the Newvilles' pond, and we were dining with the Darcombes, so for us it was a crowded social day. Mary had a glow of colour in her cheeks. She was certainly very pretty, very pink and white, very curly haired, with most delicate little features, and a long, well-formed neck. She somehow had invariably tidy, pretty clothes, however simple. She had a Newville admirer and a Darcombe admirer, and they troubled her not in the least.

Mary was still sometimes a little hard, a little cynical in what she said ; but it was a fault of the head, not of the heart. She called herself " the worldling," but she certainly had not got the worldling's discontent of simple pleasures which seemed just then to be a fault of mine. I did enjoy the skating, or any vehement outdoor exercise that I could get, but I could not find it amusing to talk to dull people ; and most people seemed very dull that winter.

However, the dinner at the Darcombes proved far from dull. I was taken in by our priest, Mr. Thompson, and put next the friend from Rome, whose name was the Chevalier Jones. " Chevalier " represented a papal honour, one of very little consequence in Rome, as I learnt afterwards. The Chevalier was an American-Irishman with money, who had settled in Rome apparently in order to ask every bishop to dinner, whether he had been introduced to him or not. I could always find topics for our dear old priest, but that evening he wanted to listen to the Chevalier's talk. It was just ordinary tittle-tattle, ordinary gossip, but as it was all connected with ecclesiastical matters it was annoying. It ranged from miracles and private revelations to the question of a successor to the Holy See ; and while he spoke of the Pope with intense unction, he seemed anxious to kill him off, in order to enjoy the excitement of having a new one. Mr. Thompson spoke little, and less and less as the Chevalier went on ; but once when the latter was describing to our hostess how he had seen the eyes move in a new miraculous picture, Mr. Thompson said sharply :—

" You should have taken St. Philip Neri's advice, and not fixed your eyes on any image while in prayer."

The Chevalier did not seem to see any snub in this remark, and went on cheerfully, while Mr. Thompson turned to Miss Darcombe, who was on his other side, and asked her how long the ice was expected to bear. I was left a silent listener to the Chevalier and the lady of the house.

Presently he got on the topic of heresy, open heresy, and then incipient, treacherous heresy.

"Oh, yes," he said, "there have been quite a lot of books condemned lately. It is so consoling to think how enormous the Index will become; it will save one so much trouble in reading."

"The Index is such a puzzling question," said Mrs. Darcombe, with a sigh. "All the priests I meet tell me to think no more about it, and yet——"

"By the way," said the Chevalier, "have you heard of a very dangerous man who has come to England lately, the Comte d'Etranges?"

I gave a start.

"Yes, I've heard him mentioned by the young lady sitting next you. She tells me——"

"Oh, he is a most dangerous man," the Chevalier's voice fluttered with agitation, and he had recourse to his champagne as a source of support. "He is not a Catholic at all; he is a masked infidel, most dangerous, most dangerous!"

"But he is a most earnest Catholic!" I cried, so loud as to frighten myself and attract general attention.

"No, no," said the Chevalier, "he pretends to be, but in reality he is a Freemason—he is one of their principal agents."

"He is nothing of the kind. He has a perfect horror of secret societies."

"He was well known to be a Freemason in Germany," he chirped on, "and then he is a liberal Catholic of the most pronounced type."

"I thought you said he was not a Catholic at all," I cried.

"Well, it's much the same thing," he went on gaily. "We ought to get rid of those fellows, turn them out. Who wants them? They think themselves so important—let's just show them that we can do without them—you've got

too many of them in England. There's George Sutcliffe, for instance."

I felt myself getting very red and very angry.

"George Sutcliffe is very sound," put in Mr. Thompson gruffly. "Of course the Church would go on very well without any of us individually, but it is unusual, or to me unusual, to hear of wishing to 'chuck' souls out of the Ark of Salvation."

"Ah, well, well," said the Chevalier, "they must go; you will see they must go, and a good riddance too."

Mr. Thompson was losing his temper. "And do you suppose, sir, that that question cannot be left to those in authority? or that those who in mere party spirit or frivolity help to drive any sheep out of the fold by want of charity and kindness will not risk, maybe, a worse condemnation than theirs?"

This time the Chevalier was pricked at last. "What very bad manners these country clergy have!" he murmured under his breath, but he was silenced on several topics at least.

"It is so very interesting to get the latest news from the Vatican—the Chevalier is a *cameriere segreto*, you know," said the youngest Miss Darcombe after dinner.

"I'd just as soon have the contents of the dustpan *segreto*, if they use a dustpan in Italy," said Mr. Thompson.

Three days later the *Catholic International Review* arrived by post. The excitement was intense—my mother and Mary had seen the story in manuscript, but to see me in print for the first time was a great event. Mr. Thompson alone was not enthusiastic. I think some faint anxiety as to the *International* attended it from its birth among the older clergy, and this in spite of George Sutcliffe, in whom they mostly put great confidence. There was nothing in that first number to alarm the most sensitive, unless some mysterious, Comte-like phrases in the article on Renan, or

the tone of intellectual confidence—a smack of something hard to define that tickled unaccustomed palates as a doubtful novelty. Certainly the correspondents from abroad who were friends of the Count had a less respectful tone in speaking of authority than we in England were then accustomed to. It seemed at the least ungentlemanly and rough. Remembering George's fears as to the foreign element, I knew that this part of the editor's task would be far from easy. But on the whole the *Review* was certainly admirably conducted, and by its third number had gone far to allay the suspicions of the most old fashioned. Well, the excitement of my first appearance in print passed over; there came a milder edition of it in February, and a still milder in March. By May I might have been publishing for years for all the effect it produced among my surroundings.

Meanwhile Marcelle and her brother had been abroad since before Christmas. I heard only that Mr. Sutcliffe was very busy with the *International*.

Life for me seemed flat, very flat, during the glorious month of May. When would they come back? How bear this endlessly long time without them? Surely, surely I had been morbid in supposing that I could not stay with them after this long interval. Marcelle had told her mother long ago, in the autumn, how utterly impossible and out of the question was such a marriage as she had suggested for the Count. The very idea had been nipped in the bud at once. I did not even blush as I thought of it. No, I could go, it was nonsense—and I *would* go. They would be back in Peak Hall in June, and Marcelle was sure to ask me to go to them at once. My firm resolve not to go had been getting very shaky for some time past.

Mary was away with the Darcombes in Paris, and I was quite alone with my mother, as Miss Mills had gone to see her sister. It was a comfort to me to have the housekeeping to see to, and to do numbers of little things for my

mother. I felt at moments as if such a steady round of duty would make up a conceivable existence. I missed Mary, but I had a duty which I loved. My mother and I drew together in a still, restful way, but I felt that when Mary and Miss Mills came back, and Mary and I went on with our ordinary life, I should not be able to endure it much longer without a change. It was glorious weather now and our little garden was a real joy, but I could not forget the endless evenings, the long hours of the past winter. We never thought of affording fires in our own rooms, and we always went upstairs at a quarter to ten. How often on those winter nights I had wrapped myself in my outdoor garments and walked up and down my room dreaming dreams and seeing visions! More than once I had sat down on the floor and buried my face in my hands on the bed and cried from sheer dreariness.

One afternoon, after I had seen that my mother had everything she wanted, I was walking up and down the garden in the May sunshine, debating with myself for the hundredth time whether I could go to Peak Hall or not. I was half-inclined to ask my mother what she thought of the position, and to explain it all to her, but I knew how frightfully agitated and nervous she would become; and, although we never up till now had confessed it to each other, we were learning to fear exceedingly anything that could upset her. When I came in again there was a note from Marcelle from London—they were in London for a night or two on their way home. It was a scrap of a letter.

“I do hope,” she wrote, “you will come down soon,” and ended by saying she was in a desperate hurry. It seemed to me that the invitation was a vague one, and it struck a chill to my heart for a moment. I put it in my pocket and went in to have tea with my mother. I tried to think that I was quite content with the letter, but I had to acknowledge

that I wasn't. My mother was reading a large sheet of foreign notepaper and smiling, almost laughing, as she did so. I poured out her tea and put it on the table.

"Dear child," she said, laying a hand on mine as she spoke, "this letter is too curious. When will French people learn our ways and our ideas? This is from Madame de Pourcelles."

I hastened to the tea-table and stooped over it with my back to my mother.

"She calmly proposes to me to unite our families by a matrimonial alliance, and she then offers me the hand of her stepson, the Comte d'Etranges, for you!"

My hand shook and the cups rattled.

"It seems that he has conceived a warm esteem for your great qualities of soul and of heart, and that he would deem it an inestimable privilege to have your happiness confided to him."

My mother put down the letter and looked over her spectacles, her eyes brimming with amusement. Something in my attitude stopped her smiles.

"I am so sorry, dear—it did not strike me at once—but of course this will prevent your staying with them this summer, and you were looking forward to your visit so much."

I could not speak, I could only sit down and pretend to drink my tea.

"I am so sorry," my mother repeated, and she looked so sweet, and loving, and beautiful I could hardly bear it.

I went across to her and knelt down by her and hid my face in my hands on her knee.

"Mother, dearest mother," I said, so low that she could hardly hear me, "could you spare me?"

She started, and I could hear the sudden beats of her heart. She bent over me and put her hand on my hair, and I could feel how she was trembling. I felt as if I were

being wrenched asunder, but I had not the faintest hesitation or doubt.

"Mother mine," I said, "would you mind so very much?" I tried to look at her but met with no response; there was nothing in her face but utter astonishment.

"I don't understand," she said feebly; "you don't really mean——"

I stood up smiling and brave. "I do mean," I said, quite quietly, "that I am willing to marry the Comte d'Etranges." Before she could speak I had rushed from the room and flown up to my own. I knelt down by my bed for a moment, and then jumped up and gazed at the summer sunshine out of the window, proud, confident, lifting my head high. Yes, he had chosen me, he had called me, distinctly through his mother's old, conventional jargon. I could hear him say, "Come, child, I want you; come and help me". Yes, I would go; I would be with him and the others; I would devote myself to the leader and his cause; I would make George and Marcelle happy. I would be with them all immediately, and hardly leave them again. A happy smile was on my lips, a serious look in my eyes. I knew it was no light, buoyant girl-love, no easy, worldly life to which I was called. "He said 'Come' in my dream," I murmured. "Yes, I will come—my leader and master, I will come."

XIV.

I THINK my first feeling on waking next morning was a sense of relief. Something was at an end. Something dull, colourless, flat, and without hope had fizzled out the previous evening. It was my girlhood. Whereas something decided, exciting, anxious but not empty had started. It was my life for the future. And I was right; mistaken, foolish, and in some ways heartless as I was just then, I was right in thinking my life would never be void in the same way again. It is a strange trouble, the sense of emptiness in girlhood, the restlessness to be doing, even to be suffering, which some girls have. I came downstairs strangely excited and yet with a sense of peace. "Thank heaven, it is settled!" I thought.

But it was by no means settled in my mother's mind. She was in a perfect fever of agitation and horror. I could see at breakfast that it was with the utmost difficulty that she could allude to the most indifferent subjects. And when she had finished she got up, drew her shawl round her, and with one hand holding her work, she said in a voice which sounded harsh from her excessive nervousness:—

"Lizzie, you must take the next two days for serious thought. Remember what your father would have thought of such a marriage. He had a horror of the French system." She paused, she had never spoken of my father to me before; perhaps she remembered that and wondered at herself for a moment. "I am afraid, seriously afraid, you are doing this

in a state of excitement. I wish I could have made your life more interesting here. But——” she did not go on, she turned away.

If her tone had been one whit more sympathetic, more tender, I must have flown to her and put my arms about her neck. But I was frightfully hurt; it seemed that she had judged me already, already made up her mind that I was only trying to get away, in a cold-blooded, selfish, mercenary marriage. My heart was strained by pain and anger. I buried my face in my hands and leant my elbows on the table. The whole history of the world of my imagination was hidden from her. What did she know of the dreams, the aspirations, the enthusiasms that were associated with the man whose stepmother had written such an artificial, absurd letter of proposal? Did she suppose that I would have married any Frenchman of position to get away from home, to be provided for? Ah, what a sacrilegious view it was, of the sacred, solemn life of great ideas, of work for the Church—hard work which I was ready for. How little she knew what a yearning I had caught from his sister to help to keep this great man right in the paths of peace and joy! To help him through the dangers we both dimly foresaw on his giant’s course! “Only you or I could do it,” Marcelle had said, and then I seemed to see, as I had done so often in my fancy, the dying father telling Marcelle to pray that Paul might have the religion men must die in. “He has not got it yet,” had been her comment.

And this—this my vocation and mission—was viewed as a worldly, mercenary, low thing of which my father would have had a horror. For the first time my mother had spoken of my father to me, and it was to bring him in in a harsh unquestioning, unjust condemnation!

Here is the picture of that morning so many years ago as it appears to me now. In the little dining-room the excited, weeping, hurt girl pressing her elbows hard on the table. I

see the comfortable tea-things, the spotless glass and china, the fruit and flowers, all the homely details suggestive of ordinary domestic tenderness and peace. And in the next room leaning back in a chair, her work idly lying on her knees, her eyes closed, her lips a little puckered, sat the mother—who had known marriage and the mysteries of birth and death; who had been worn with the long tedium of physical suffering, the weariness of sordid cares; who had known the joys of companionship with sacrifice, and the chill aching peace of loneliness. With all she had learnt and known she was not mistress of that experience; she could not take it up in her hand and make a gift of it to the girl who sat alone in the next room—the girl who knew nothing of these mysteries, who walked in her own dreams not knowing that all those things were contained in that one word “Marriage,” and that she must meet them as she went forward. They were both weeping in adjoining rooms, on the sunny summer morning, while the roses looked in upon them. And, worst of all, both were angry, both were hurt, and both went on to act foolishly. My mother made a great mistake when she wrote to Miss Mills to ask her to shorten her holiday, and it was all the more a mistake as Mary was anyhow coming home next day; it gave the impression, a true one, of a hastily called council of war. She also asked Mr. Thompson to come and see her. This did not mean that she would be unreserved with any of them, or speak openly of her feelings to any of the three. But it meant that she would show them the letter and get their opinions as to my extraordinary state of mind.

I heard her telling the housemaid that the room was to be got ready for Miss Mills, and I saw Mr. Thompson come heavily across the garden. Of course I prepared for combat. I could not write to Marcelle. I felt that I could not even answer a letter from Mr. Sutcliffe. I had not a clear enough mind for my own novel. Besides, I felt dimly that my own

especial work, my important authorship, was now far secondary. I knew that the life I meant to lead could hardly leave my imagination free enough for fiction. I should be overshadowed by the Count. I would rather begin at once, this morning with doing something for him. So in solemn exultation I set to work to do into English an article he had lately published in France. My head had a delusive feeling of clearness. I don't think I made any sense of what I was doing. I thought I could hear the murmurs of my mother's voice and Mr. Thompson's, and then I found that I was wrong, as I could see Mr. Thompson in the distance, back in his own garden across the fields. Their talk must have been very short.

Those two days were surprisingly uncomfortable. I was absolutely obstinate in my own mind in refusing to review the situation. I thought I was being hardly treated. I did not allow myself any doubts. I felt that the whole winter had been an unconscious preparation for this. To me it was no new idea.

I don't think I was pleasant to Miss Mills and Mary when they came home. Miss Mills was excessively nervous, but looked much as she used to ten years earlier when I had done a German exercise badly on purpose. Mary came home knowing nothing, in the highest spirits that were hardly dashed by mine. I did not know which I minded most, Miss Mills' knowledge or Mary's ignorance. I was not really nice to her about her unpacking and her presents for everybody in the house. And then when she brought me a whole sheaf of photographs of works of art from Paris, I had hard work not to cry.

"Lizzie, you have been much, much too much alone, darling," she said, in a puzzled, bewildered way.

During supper Mary made nearly all the talk, and we all listened to her with great earnestness. But early in the

evening I felt that I must leave them and let Mary hear the worst. I went up to my room, lit my candles and tried to read. As I read, I began to cry, just a little. I shut the book and walked up and down the room. Oh, how terribly lonely I felt! I knew with a new knowledge how I loved them down there, and how they loved me! I was cutting myself off from them. They were feeling, knowing it too. And what was I going to? Would the new friends love me like this? Would my life ever again have the warm wadding that had wrapped me round at home? Something of the unhomely element in Marcelle, of the chill cloudy atmosphere of the Count, seemed to be round me like a mist on a mountain top, cutting me off from those three who loved me and talked about me, and did not understand, in the room below.

It was beginning to be intolerable pain when light feet ran up the stairs. The door opened, and Mary, radiant with tender smiles, came in and wrapt her arms round me.

"It's all right, darling," she said. "I understand, and mother is beginning to. Darling, why didn't you explain?"

It was very sweet, that moment! We sat down on the bed entwined in some way, her dear, bright-blue eyes full of love and confidence.

"You see, darling, mother first took the letter as an absurdity. She didn't know; she had no notion of what had been going on in your mind. And of course, it was a horrid French way of doing things. But I am not a bit surprised, Lizzie, love. You don't know how changed you have been since you have known those people. I was quite sure something was up, only I made a mistake. You see, I thought it was Mr. Sutcliffe."

"Oh, no, no," I cried, blushing hotly, "never, never! He is in love with Marcelle."

"Well, you see, darling, I guessed the symptoms though

I mistook the object. But you must not be surprised at mother not understanding."

I shivered a little. I saw now more fully how terribly awkward my position would be, and how impossible to explain.

"I've told mother now," said the beaming Mary, "that I know you are in love with the Count, and he is in love with you. When she has had a little time to get accustomed to the idea——"

I jumped up in despair. "Oh, Mary, Mary," I cried, "wait a moment—let me speak to you in a minute."

I leant out of the open window for a moment, sniffing up the sweet, heavy scent from the garden below. Then I turned round.

"Mary, dear, you are not quite, quite right, and I want you to try hard to understand me. I do admire Paul d'Etranges in a way, more than anybody I know, and I look up to him very, very much. And as he wants to marry me, I am very proud. He has asked me to go to him, and I will go unless mother absolutely forbids it. I would go all the more if he were poor and miserable. Mary, I hope and pray I may be able to help him. But though he wants me and I want to go to him, I don't think he loves me as 'men call love,' and I don't love him in that way. I will not tell mother and you that I do, because as far as I can see I do not. If he were very much in love with me, I don't think this would be right. But Mary, if you knew him, you would see that he could never be in love. But we shall marry because we need each other, and have the same ideals and the same work. It is a Christian marriage, and I wonder very much if many other marriages could begin as well, or," I added softly, looking out at the darkness of the trees and the dim light above them, "end as well as I trust and believe this will."

Mary has told me since how she was utterly aghast and

miserable. The explanation was worse to her than my mother's views, because she had not believed in them, and because there was something, she said, so uncanny in the mixture in me of coolness and frankness with a weird sort of enthusiasm. I remember her face as it turned very, very white.

"Then I was quite wrong," she said, in a low voice. "Oh, Lizzie, this is terrible—I don't know what to say, where I am, or what I am doing."

She had come up beaming with hope and joy in her mission to put things right: but we both went to bed subdued and silent. Her room opened into mine, and I could see her kneeling by her bed praying late into the night. After that night everything went on badly. The gleam of joy when Mary came to me had done no good. I felt worried at her point of view, and particularly worried at her having thought for months past that I was in love. It was absurd, and not suitable to the solemn choric-dance-like mood in which I was living. How seriously they all took me! saying very little to me, and consulting by the hour together in twos and threes, or, if Mr. Thompson joined them, in a quartette; wondering, fearing and speculating.

Their anxiety killed their sense of humour and was fatal to their ordinary amount of tact. In the end I addressed a magnificent ultimatum to my mother, in which probably, my new practice in writing fiction was manifested by my style.

I sat in the study undisturbed. I was in very good dispositions, and I prayed that I might do my duty. I first wrote much what I had said to Mary, then I begged her pardon for not having explained myself sooner. Afterwards my style sank from the magnificent, and I think this is what I wrote:—

"Don't be angry with me, dearest mother, I am ready to do what you tell me. I would not begin this new life without your blessing. As I told Mary, I am quite ready

to give it up if you tell me that you wish me to do so. And if you wish me to give it up, I will settle down to life at home very soon. Please don't think that I want to marry the Count because I want a life of excitement : such an idea would hurt me very much. Please tell me soon what you have settled.

"Your loving daughter,
"LIZZIE."

I slipped into the empty drawing-room, and left my large envelope with "For Mother" written on it, and retired with a beating heart.

A few minutes later my mother, who rarely came upstairs during the day, came into my little bedroom. I was sitting by the window when I felt her light touch on my shoulder, and I looked up. She kissed me slowly and very sweetly, with loving confidence and kindness in her eyes. She understood, I could see, that at the least this was no revolting daughter ; and she was grateful.

"I will answer you to-morrow, darling," she said, in a low voice, and looked as if she wanted to say more. Her eyes were resting, as mine had done, on the dark sharp shadows on the green grass under the trees. Whatever more she wanted to say, she could not do it, and she soon moved quietly away. A mixture of emotions struggled in me. *Loyale je serai durant ma vie.* That was my text. The old generous submission of my girlhood was in me still, and I yearned to give my mother peace. The deeper feelings of my heart seemed to surge above my imaginative yearning for a new life. Then, too, the horror of my home circle was working its effect. I was becoming frightened. The d'Etranges, brother and sister, seemed a less vivid presence than the little home group, who were so sure that I was doing wrong.

I suppose that if my mother had taken advantage of my

letter a reaction would have followed at once, and I should have hankered terribly after the forbidden. But the first moment would probably have brought a sense of relief. As it was, I think the very fulness of my submission prevented my mother taking advantage of it. She consented to the marriage, and I do not see how she could have forbidden it. I was three-and-twenty, no longer a child ; and to refuse would have been a strong assertion of parental authority. The only thing that neither struck me, nor my family, was that a compromise was conceivable. My mother might have suggested to Madame de Pourcelles that such a cut-and-dried arrangement was unusual in England ; that she would not refuse so honourable a proposal, but that it was possible to wait and let us get to know each other better. She might have asked for more action on the part of the suitor, and that the young people should settle things for themselves. But my—according to her—entirely unromantic attitude prevented her even thinking of this alternative.

Having locked my two doors, I cried much during the night which followed her consent, tears of fear and loneliness, but I never in reality looked back.

XV.

I WAS once more in the train going North, once more going to visit Marcelle and Paul d'Etranges. Trying days had been passed. Business and correspondence had gone on for the last three weeks, of which my mother spared me nothing, not a false-sounding compliment in a letter from Madame de Pourcelles, nor a note of congratulation from members of my own family, who woke up to my existence on hearing of so interesting and so worldly-wise a marriage. They already knew far more than I did of the prosperity and position of the Comte d'Etranges. They had spied out the richness of his lands, and the importance of his connections, for themselves. Paul's own letters to my mother were formal and correct, and he had suddenly ceased writing to me, while I seemed to detect a little shyness even in Marcelle's loving expressions of joy. But at last I was going back to them, going to resume the old joys of work and companionship. The only drawback was that Madame de Pourcelles was to be at Peak Hall. Conventionality demanded a chaperon, and the lady who had planned the marriage was coming over to see it through. Still in spite of an occasional overwhelming sense of embarrassment, my spirits rose. I had brought my MSS. and my books, and during the two hours' journey to London with Miss Mills, I had revelled in Morley's *Life of Burke*, and forgot all cares in that little masterpiece.

After some shopping Miss Mills had seen me into a carriage at King's Cross with a promising old lady and left me

to myself. I had gone back to my book, poring over it with my short-sighted eyes, when I saw George Sutcliffe standing at the window. I started, and I felt that a vivid colour had sprung into my face.

"I startled you, I am afraid," he said, "may I come in here?"

I hastily and shyly agreed, and he was soon settled opposite to me. I thought the old lady in the farther corner looked faintly amused at our meeting. We were soon speeding out of London.

"They did not tell me you were coming," he said.

"Nor me that you were," I answered.

"I am going with Paul to the Catholic International Scientific Congress at F—— in Switzerland on the sixteenth," he said.

"Yes, Marcelle told me about that; she said that Paul would be away after the fifteenth, for about ten days." A moment's silence followed. I was wondering how he would congratulate me on my engagement. Perhaps he thought the old lady might overhear him, for he did not allude to it.

"Did you know that Madame de Pourcelles is coming?" I asked.

"Yes; Mademoiselle d'Etranges wrote that her mother was coming over on family business. I wondered——" Then he stopped and looked out of the window.

Turning round he caught my eye. "The *International* is beginning to sell at last," he said, with an effort, "and I think we are living down the prejudice against us. Two bishops have written to me most kindly. They say the tone is excellent; but it is tiresome work. I cannot get d'Etranges to see that I must keep the tone steadily respectful. Then when he owns the necessity as a matter of diplomacy, he talks as if it were a necessary bit of humbug. He would understand me better if he thought I were simply

laughing at the authorities in my sleeve. He has an unmitigated contempt for any ruler who is not a scientific specialist. He is just as narrow towards our men of action, as they are towards him."

"If he could get rid of party spirit," I said, and then something caught at my throat. It was the consciousness of my engagement. It was obvious now that George Sutcliffe did not know of it! My heart beat wildly with excitement. I had thought that we both wanted to talk of indifferent things; but it was impossible that, knowing my position, he could begin by criticising the Count.

He gave a short, sharp sigh. "It would be happier," he said, "to belong to a party, to be a party man. Nobody, or hardly anybody, sees what I am driving at. I'm too old-fashioned for the new school, and too modern for the old-fashioned, and so nobody quite trusts me."

I hardly heard what he said. I was thinking how depressed and worn he looked. I was longing to tell him that he might now hope to win Marcelle. I wanted to break into his manifest sense of loneliness and chill, with a different note. I could almost hear my heart beat, but I could not find the words; it was too difficult. He was silent for a few minutes, then with a brighter smile he said half-shyly:—

"Do you know what family affairs Madame de Pourcelles can be coming to arrange? Do you think—— It struck me as just possible it might be something matrimonial, but probably that is nonsense."

"It is matrimonial, and for the Count," I managed to articulate, looking out of the window.

"Really, really," his voice was eager and boyish, "are you sure you are right?"

"I know all about it," I murmured, "because——" and then I absolutely could not utter one syllable more.

"Do you mean that some girl is actually going to——" his voice was happy, mocking and youthful.

I looked gravely at his face, which was beaming with smiles, and interrupted quickly. "I am the girl!" I cried.

I never have lost the impression of the change on his face, horror-struck, incredulous, in a moment.

"No, no!" he cried. (I am sure the old lady in the corner imagined it to be a lovers' quarrel.) "Oh, no; not you and d'Etranges! you are joking."

"I am not joking," I said sternly; and drawing the glove off my left hand, I let him see the ring, with one historic diamond in an eighteenth-century setting, that had been sent to my mother to present to me. The clear, cold, shining light in it typified to me my future life! The ring felt heavy as I raised my hand.

My heart sank. I had thought George would be so happy. I had thought that all condemnation, all disapproval had been left behind me at home. He was evidently too much startled to remember his manners.

"But when—when did you see him?" he asked.

"I have not seen him since October," I said stiffly, "and he did not write. It has been arranged between our mothers."

The expression of horror, and even disgust, deepened on the face of the Englishman.

"Was that what you meant in the autumn when——"

"When I spoke of Marcelle not marrying till the Count married. Yes; something had been said to me then, but I did not then feel it possible. Now I am quite content. I am proud to think of the life I have before me; I pray I may be worthy of him." I found my voice sounding loud, and realised that the train had stopped, and the old lady was getting out. I was holding myself up defiantly, looking straight in front of me. George rose to shut the door after the old lady, and as the train went on, he stood there looking out of the window with his broad back to me. A sudden

jerk made him lurch a little, then he came back and sat down opposite me.

"I don't mind if I do make you angry," he said, "but I must get it off my chest at once. You are making a very great mistake, though perhaps a splendid mistake. My goodness, don't I understand it! Do you think I don't know what he is? I am at his feet when he is at his best, but it would not do to live there. It has twisted and tired his sister's mind, and hardened her character; but she *is* his sister, and they are in many ways alike. Don't imagine that you, with your sensitive warm heart, could stand it."

"I shall love him," I said stoutly.

"Do you see what you've admitted?" he asked me, sadly and gently. His manner at the moment was so like that of a father confessor, that it was difficult to be angry. I said nothing.

"I wish I could do anything to send you home again," he went on simply. "I am sure you don't know what you are about. Oh, do, for Heaven's sake, consider it again! He will hardly realise it when he has married you; he will take all and give you nothing. I would rather a sister of mine, if I had one, were married to any ordinary betting, racing, human man, than to d'Etranges with all his gifts. He will go on toiling and thinking, toiling and scheming, and you will toil after him until you are worn out."

I was amazed at his excitement, he seemed unable to stop. "*Not* scheming," I managed to protest.

"Miss Fairfax, it is scheming, for good or for evil. I will say to you what I would say to nobody else, and if it is in vain, I shall at least have a clear conscience. . . . I can't help recognising great spaces of character in d'Etranges that I don't understand. If he lived alone, it would matter less; but I am frightened at any weaker life coming into contact with his. There is one I want to save from him, and I hope and trust I may. But don't think lightly of taking

her place. I may be wrong; the good elements in him may triumph, he may prove entirely noble. But you must know what it is to admire some one very much and feel reverence for him, and yet know that the whole man admits of a different interpretation. You say to yourself, 'It is not true,' but it is what his enemy would say, and it would be difficult to answer. I believe in this case the sinister interpretation to be untrue, but I feel its force to-day since what you have told me. For God's sake, ask yourself in time if you have no doubts of his absolute straightness, no fear of his love of power, no suspicion of a possible cruel element being found in him, if he were withstood. Then another thing: in spite of our enthusiasm for his mental powers, and his great thoughts on religious questions, do you ever doubt if he is a Catholic at heart? He is one in his brain, I know, and perhaps he has no heart. But think about him, imagine him dying for instance——"

George became silent. I had noticed before, that though he liked to talk of the philosophy of religion, he was very reserved as to the spiritual life. Now he had stopped at the point on which Paul's father and Paul's sister had insisted. Was the Count's religion even now the religion for a man to die in? Was it more than a theory, a system of ideas? But before I had time to face the question for myself, let alone to answer Mr. Sutcliffe, I was interrupted again.

"Must you come to Peak Hall now?" he said abruptly, and his voice and manner were almost rough, and irritated me.

"Am I not on the way?" I asked stiffly.

He looked at his watch. "We reach D—— in half an hour; you could there take a train back to London, and telegraph to Peak Hall to say you were not well enough to come. You look ill, I am sure it would be perfectly true; don't mind if your people are startled."

"Oh, no," I said feebly, "they would be too glad."

I saw he had gathered hope from the admission. "I will not say I have met you, of course," he went on; "have you much luggage?"

"One box only."

"And those things?" pointing to the rack. He stood up and lifted down my rugs.

"Leave them on the rack," I said quickly. His action seemed to rouse me from a dream. "And now it is my turn to speak. I have let you talk on, because I didn't want you to suppose that I could not stand hearing all you have said to me, and a great deal more. Paul d'Etranges is a great man and a genius. We ordinary people cannot quite measure him. We see possibilities of all sorts. But if one wanted to find a character with no possibilities of wrong in it, one would end by finding a nincompoop, or nobody at all. I am not afraid of Paul. I am not afraid of work or strain—I don't want a mothering husband. I would rather not have one. I am quite capable of a *terre à terre* existence, and I want somebody to take me out of it. I will not pretend to judge of whether he is quite human or quite a Catholic, but if he is not——" I hesitated. I had been speaking defiantly, defying something besides the man opposite to me. I looked at him, his keen eyes were fixed on me, and for a moment my heart stood still and I was horrified; but it only lasted a moment—that impression of something between us, which there had never been before. It passed, and I felt the sudden impression to have been absurd as he spoke again.

"It will be your mission to make him both," he said. "I was afraid it was so—it has been that with Marcelle. It is caused by something in the man himself. If you both thought I was going to the dogs to-morrow, it would not interest either of you. But he threatens to do something on a dramatic scale, and so——"

My cheeks were hot, my breath came quickly.

"After all," he exclaimed suddenly, "we are not stopping at D——!"

"What does it matter?" I said angrily. "I think I have put up with more than I ought to put up with. What right have you——?"

"None whatever," he said, with a big laugh; "only that you were very kind to me in the autumn."

"So you are very rude to me now! And it is horrid," I went on, "to spoil things as you do. I thought you and Marcelle would be so happy."

"You meant to watch us playing in low rich meadows from your mountain tops," he said. "I don't at all know if I shall succeed in getting her down to my level; and even so, how spoilt our joy will be by the huge muddle you, her friend and mine, are making of your life."

"You are ill, or you would not be so morbid and cross!" I cried.

"You are not very well, or you would not be quite so superior or idealistic or cross!"

"I do wish you had not got into this carriage."

"I don't. I am glad to have had my say, and now it's done I won't say anything more about it. Only I wish to goodness you were going home."

I took up my book, and he took up a paper, and the next hour was passed in silence. I was very tired, and I fell asleep, and woke to find George Sutcliffe standing looking at me with a cloak in his hand.

"Here we are," he said, "it is quite chilly, put this on."

I wrapped myself in the cloak, and we got out at the little wayside station where the train only stayed for the moment. Our luggage was flung after us from the van, and the train was gone.

The dog-cart I knew so well was waiting, and a luggage-cart from the station. The dog-cart only held two, so it had not been possible for the d'Etranges to meet us. We had

an eight-mile drive over the moors. The fresh, keen air soon woke me up, and I then realised that a change had come over my companion. He talked easily, but his manner was not in the least intimate. It was as if a door had been shut between us, and I surmised truly that it was a door neither of us would wish to reopen. We spoke a little of the scenery, of the long northern twilight, of the coming Congress, and of a paper Paul was to read there. It would be a matter of great importance for Paul, Mr. Sutcliffe told me, as the Catholic International Scientific Congress drew together some of the first religious thinkers from all parts of the world. We gradually became silent as we got nearer the Hall. I was both nervous and calm. I had a sense of wives brought to their husbands in Scripture; or of princesses fetched from abroad for kings and princes; I recalled how Rachael had seen Isaac from afar, and had bowed down before her lord. All this was mixed with the sensations I had known when hesitating in a wind before getting into the sea, with an added reminiscence of a dentist's waiting-room. All ended in prayer, and I clasped my rosary, with one hand, in my pocket while the other hand held on to the rail, for the road was rough and George was driving fast. We were in a very dark bit of road, black from overhanging trees, when we heard a familiar shriek.

"Are you going to run over us then? That is kind, isn't it?"

We pulled up short, we had just passed Marcelle and her brother. I scrambled down and found myself in Marcelle's arms, and she made a consoling amount of noise. Then she held out her hand to Mr. Sutcliffe. Just behind her stood Paul, tall and very dark, bare-headed. He stepped up to me, took my hand and kissed it. I felt a thrill as the cool lips were pressed for a longish moment on my hand, then the tapering, strong thin fingers held mine in his cold light touch. It was very reverent and solemn. In my inner soul,

as it seemed, I was going through some ancient ritual act of offering and of union which I did not understand. I felt as if I were a taller, mistily bigger thing, as we began walking side by side behind the dog-cart.

"You would rather walk?"

"I would rather walk."

"Marcelle then can drive."

"Yes."

"You are not too tired?"

"It will refresh me to walk."

XVI.

AFTER all, Madame de Pourcelles had not yet arrived ; business had detained her in Paris, but she was expected next day. I do not think anybody was looking forward to her coming, and relief was evident on all faces except Marcelle's, when a telegram announced that she was still obliged to put off her visit for several days. With the good news some of my shyness vanished. I felt as if much of the formal business of the engagement were postponed.

Paul had, as usual, not come into breakfast, but he had met the boy with the telegram, and had brought it into Marcelle. Quite a boyish smile of relief lit his dark face, as he turned to me.

“ Then may we not as well do some work ? ”

I agreed joyfully, and we turned towards the study. When we got into the little oak-panelled room, full of sunlight, I sat down at the table and he stood opposite to me.

“ May we have the last chapter of your story ? ” he said. There was something a little amused, and a little tender in his smile as he looked down at me. I felt, as I glanced at him, how entirely dignified and noble his presence was, if not quite of this modern world, worldly. I knew he was studying me ; thinking of what the position between us must be to me ; wondering, with the sort of reverence with which serious elders wonder what is passing in the minds of children, affectionate and not in the least embarrassed. *C'est donc ma femme*, I seemed to read in his eyes, so quietly kind and wholly calm, not indifferent, but not in the least agitated.

"May we have the last chapter of your story?" the voice was very low and clear, yet a new voice, acknowledging a new position. I tried to meet his eyes, but I found it difficult.

"No," I said, as firmly as I could, "your work must come first."

"Not always," he said.

"Yes, always." I had put my elbows on the table, and now I buried my face in my hands.

"You shall see it is not so always," he said, and coming to the table he laid his hand on my head. I tried not to tremble, but I was greatly troubled. "I have done it, I have done it, it is all settled," I thought to myself, as the light long fingers lay on my hair; and in that thought there was peace. *Loyale je serai durant ma vie.* For a few moments we were thus, and then as he raised his hand I looked up at him almost against my own will, as if giving him my face to read. It was not Paul's fault that he unconsciously claimed and received such a submission. It was not merely the relation of woman to man between us, to which I submitted; it was simply as myself to Paul, the weaker to the stronger vital force. He looked at me very earnestly, and I was the more troubled because I felt he understood me. He knelt down by my side, leaning a little against the table as if it were a bench in church.

"You want us to work together," he said, "for great objects, great thoughts. You will not come to me frivolously or lightly, I know; our life together shall be inspired by noble aims. But, *ma petite*, we are not only workers in the field of thought, we are also a man and a woman with lives to lead; we must be peaceful and restful. I would not put a strain upon your youth, and if I, wrapped in my own work, unconsciously do such a thing, you must stop me, you must tell me."

His voice thrilled me, as it always did, and my heart

swelled at thinking how George had wronged him. I came perilously near to loving him at that moment.

I do not remember how we settled down afterwards, but it was not long before I was in a low seat near his arm-chair, reading aloud an uncommonly stiff bit of philosophy for some hours. I don't think he looked at me again, but I may be wrong. I think he had found those moments of courtship, though agreeable, though ideal, decidedly fatiguing; and I am convinced that in ten minutes after I had begun to read to him the whole matter had faded from his consciousness. He had quite forgotten the fact of our engagement before an hour had passed. At last Marcelle, not without curiosity in her eyes, came to insist on our going to luncheon.

XVII.

"I WONDER if *Maman* will come to-morrow. I hope not ; so amiable, is it not, on the part of a daughter ? It seems to me that she will not arrive before Paul and Mr. Sutcliffe have to start for Switzerland."

We were walking up and down the terrace in the evening, after dinner, arm-in-arm. It was very little more than a year ago since our first evening together. Now, as then, it was glorious summer weather ; now, as then, the river, not half-full, tinkled musically over the stones ; the moors were of a deep purple, and the sky above wondrously clear. Now, as then, the white roses and jasmine asserted their individuality in the warm dusk, and a light breeze made movements and currents among the rich scents of the garden. The contrast of unchanging nature and changeful human hearts, touched my thoughts a little sadly. All about us was the same, but we two girls could never be quite the same again. As I wondered I moved a little apart from Marcelle to look at her. How much could be read in either of our faces of the change within ? Marcelle turned to me, a radiant smile shining in her face ; it was the face and figure of a fully developed woman, with a certain liberty of pose and gesture, a beauty full of health and freedom, rich in the gifts of animal life, richer far from the soul which lit up the whole personality. It would seem that the hungry soul was satisfied at last.

"Why am I to be so happy ?" Her whisper thrilled me.

"Lisa, if I had been sent into the world only to be happy, it would have been just like this. Oh, you sweet little thing, with that new nun's look on your face and your pretty soft hair, isn't it a beautiful world we live in? Let us not be anxious, little one. Do you know I had almost forgotten how pretty your brown eyes were, and what a sweet little face it is," and she kissed me.

"I wish you would not talk of my being so sweet, it sounds sugary."

"Here they come," she said. "No, it is only George Sutcliffe; stay with me, Lisa."

George came up to us and threw a cigar away as he joined us. We turned on the terrace.

"Let us go out of the garden on to the bridge and look down at the water," said Marcelle, taking my arm.

"D'Etranges is just coming," said George, looking at me; "he stayed to find a paper in his study."

"I will wait for him if you go on, and tell him where you are."

I turned my back on them just as we reached the door in the old wall.

"Don't stay dawdling," Marcelle called after me, "we might all go up on the moors when you come."

"All right," I answered.

Yes, it was all right, supremely right, and George's pale face and compressed lips alone would have told me a good deal. The air felt a little chilly as I walked back along the terrace. At first I did not notice that the Count did not come out. A cloud of sadness had come over me. I felt weak and small, and my feet dragged a little on the old flags. I had not been turned away from the garden, I had not lost the rich scent and the beauty of the spot I loved. But Eve would never have wished to stay in the first garden alone, I thought dimly. Presently, the sense of loneliness increasing, I began to wonder what Paul was doing. Was he still

hunting for a lost paper? Ought I to go and help him? I felt extremely disinclined to go and help him. I would far rather stay out in the garden alone; but if I ought to go? If with those dim eyes of his he was peering in vain for the paper, and Marcelle not to be got at just now? It might be that Marcelle would soon not be to be had at all. Our usual feeling in that house was the impossibility of the Count wanting anything and not getting it.

I walked on, and turned on to the terrace in front of the house; then I could see into the study, and there with a bright light by him sat Paul, not hunting for anything but writing hard. I stood there and watched him, and as I did so the feeling of repugnance to going in was lost in interest. He raised his head several times, and there was a glow in his eyes, a light on his features which were sternly compressed with the effort of thought and composition: the muscles on his forehead were tensely drawn. Once or twice an almost sinister smile came over his face for a moment, as if he had some adversary in his power to whom he was applying torture. I was moving half-consciously towards him, when I felt strongly that probably he did not want me; I watched his hand crossing the paper swiftly, now half-raised, and I seemed to feel its light touch again on my head.

But would it not be better to go away, to go to bed, as nobody needed me? Something kept me there, I cannot understand it now, but I stayed watching him for almost an hour, held there as it seemed by a mixture of curiosity and fear, and an odd feeling that I must be at hand in case he should want me. Then I heard the others coming up to the front door round the corner of the little house. My heart beat, but I did not move. Two minutes later George Sutcliffe stepped out of the drawing-room window close to me. I turned quickly towards him.

"Congratulate me," he said, holding out both hands, "it's all right, she has accepted me."

It was getting very dark, but the light from the drawing-room showed me a face intensely happy, and I felt tears rising in my eyes, tears of joy that made it hard to speak. I could only put out my small cold hands to meet his grasp, but I am sure he understood me. George did generally understand.

"She has gone to the chapel, and I must go there. Do you remember the first night you came here last year how she said, 'It is mean not to say thank you, sometimes'. This is such a time, isn't it?"

"Ah, *tiens*, it is late, where are you all?" said Paul, emerging from the study on to the terrace. "But what has happened to you, Sutcliffe, you look a little pleased."

"Marcelle has——" he hesitated.

"Oh, she has, has she?" cried Paul mockingly. "It has come right? I am awfully glad." He put his arm on George's shoulder with rather a French gesture. Then I saw from Paul's tone that this was what he had wished, and I wondered how much he had seen, and understood, and even brought about, all along. I crept quietly into the drawing-room to leave them together.

"We both get infinitely more than we deserve," Paul said, raising his voice a very little and glancing after me. "You don't mind my saying that, *mon frère*?"

"No, indeed," came in George's almost exuberantly happy voice.

Marcelle presently came to my room, very quiet, very calm, with a drop of holy water shining on her white forehead. She sat down by me on the sofa and put her arm round me.

"*Chérie*," she said, "I am almost frightened at my happiness."

"Don't," I said imploringly.

"I can't help it," she said. "I felt in the chapel as if the

joy of life had got such a hold on me that it almost shut off God. God could never allow that, Lisa, so I was frightened."

"Don't," I went on, "don't, darling. You must trust Him in happiness as well as in sorrow. It is such a comfort to know that one must trust whether one is on the right path or the wrong. Whatever human things bind us, there is God there all the time, and we must give Him the future as well as the present."

My words seemed to calm us both, and we went very quietly to rest.

XVIII.

I WOKE next morning with a sense of mingled joy and sorrow. Half-awake I was not sure which feeling had the best of it, but with consciousness I remembered that it was joy—joy in the happiness of George and Marcelle. The joy of sympathy, however, is a lonely one, and it often needs consolation, however true and real it may be. I felt very tired : it would be an effort to get up. The day was gloomy and chilly, and I could see through the lattice window the rain falling steadily. Why make the effort ? Should I be missed by those two at breakfast ? Would not Paul as usual have his coffee and his thoughts to himself ? “ Paul, always the same Paul.” I smiled as St. Augustine’s words came back to me. No, I could rest if I would, and having thought of St. Augustine, I got up and fetched from my bag my little copy of the *Confessions*. In that intense individuality I found companionship. Across the ages the great voice spoke to me, confided to me, as to a secret friend, the truth of the loneliness of man’s egoism, and the rich land of the Divine consolations. That giant spirit who had watched with interest his own tears like any woman, self-conscious, tired by a decadent civilisation, is he not our great consoler ? Are we not also very tired, and far more unfit to bear the weight of another decadent civilisation, speaking with a yet greater confusion of tongues ?

When I came downstairs at past midday it was still raining hard, and it felt chilly ; but my heart was warm with the

thought of seeing those two together. I found them sitting in the drawing-room, but my first impression was that their chairs were rather far apart, and my second, that Marcelle was pouting like a child, and George looking depressed. I think from what I gathered afterwards that George, who had, by the way, a bad headache, had been inclined to talk with feeling, and very quietly, of his parents and his home and his dead brother, whereas Marcelle in childish high spirits had expected to enjoy this English way of being engaged, as the freshest, sweetest game of life. She had, I suspect, been a little rough and inattentive, and then had been hurt at his being hurt. She had said something which rankled in his mind, taking for granted that Lady Sutcliffe would be stiff, and "very English," and badly dressed. I doubt if she even knew she had said it. She was letting herself think aloud, and she was accustomed to look at minor things in her own mind with almost brutal candour.

Then when perceiving his mood to be one of sentiment, she talked of her own childhood, of her father, and much of Paul. George being hurt was in his turn irresponsible. And then he made another attempt. He was intensely keen about his work on Burke and the Catholic Church, tracing the line of thought which connect Burke and Coleridge and Newman together. He had brought the manuscript down to breakfast, looking forward to reading what he had done to Marcelle; and talk so far not having prospered, as I joined them he suggested that they should begin. She acquiesced, probably a little relieved, and asked me to stay and listen. I think George was quite satisfied, but after a dutiful effort for five minutes, she was evidently not listening to a word he read, and I wondered how soon he would find it out. And yet it seemed to me an admirable bit of work. But Paul's sister had caught certain phases and phrases of thought from him, and this was in another school of thinking. Besides, Paul had never cared for

Burke, which alone would have been enough. But it was not only this that made her inattentive I could see. She was very unusually still, even her hands did not move; her face wore a tragic expression, and presently one large pearly tear rolled over her cheek and fell off her chin. I think one of her compatriots would have seen it and kissed it away, but George did not. I took it as an unconscious hint, however, and slipped away, though I would have given a good deal to know what would pass.

I took a few turns up and down the dark hall, unable to settle to anything, gloomy and impatient but half-amused. Then I went to the chapel, and presently into Paul's study by a little door that opened behind the big bookcase. I was in the room, before I was startled into keeping quite still. Paul was standing at his full height, his sharply cut profile distinct against the light. He looked stern, and yet betrayed more emotion than I had conceived possible in him. Marcelle was leaning against him, and he was gently patting her shoulder.

"Nothing, dear little one, nothing, indeed; what should ever come between us? We may marry or be given in marriage, but we are still ourselves, *toujours Paul et Marcelle*."

I moved softly backwards. Marcelle had raised her head and Paul's low clear voice went on:—

"Do you not remember how the sister of one of our earliest ancestors sent her husband's head to him on a charger, and would he have hesitated to send his wife's back to her? Of course not," he was laughing now, a low tender laugh, yet I shivered. Somehow I could never help taking the Count a little too seriously. I was very anxious to get away unobserved, but I had to turn the handle of the door slowly for fear of a noise, and so I heard Marcelle say:—

"Oh, yes, *le bon cœur*, straight, truthful, one can rest upon him without fear."

"I think," said Paul's calm judicial voice, as if summing up, "we are both very fortunate."

I shut the door behind me quietly and went into the drawing-room. There was George Sutcliffe leaning one elbow on the mantelpiece, his head resting on his hand. I moved quickly towards him, then checked myself, and mechanically rested my hand on the other corner of the old stone chimney-piece. A moment passed in silence and then the Count came in.

He gave a quick glance at us.

"You look as if you both wanted a fire on the hearth," he said. "I think we must tell Marcelle to light it. It is really cold enough, although the silly calendar calls it the thirteenth of August."

XIX.

IN the afternoon the clouds broke, light and warmth came back to us. George's headache was better or gone, a reaction seemed to have taken hold of us. Marcelle was easily affected by atmosphere; the cold, the wet, and George's headache, had hastened the mood which was bound to come. I told myself this, as I climbed the moor with the Count, and heard the laughter of the two behind.

"What a child it is!" said Paul, looking towards the little wood from which the sounds were coming. I too was thinking of Marcelle, and did not answer. There was something of a strain in the childlike element he spoke of which puzzled me. I see now, that she was too modern for a girl such as I was then to understand her. In spite of her strong active figure, and her type of beauty, she came of an effete aristocracy. She was not modern in a worldly sense, but her acute craving for nature and simplicity were decadent. Her nervous excitements, her fiercely analytical habits of thoughts were all modern: while lodging in the midst were a pure and single heart and a very living spiritual nature. She and George were in their Eden again that afternoon, perhaps they had both been a little frightened at their own moods of the morning; instinctively they turned to play rather than to reality. And the play was not rough, but tender and reverent, as of sweet children whose guardian angels love their sporting.

But I could not throw off my mood of depression and

heavy anxiety. I think Paul guessed it, or some of it. He was again quite conscious of our engagement, he had come out intending to enjoy my society, to devote himself to me. I was a bit heavy and perverse, I think; what right had I to feel angry or hurt or frightened? Had I ever insisted on the first place with Paul, did I want love-making? No; only what I had not realised beforehand, was that in our curious relation I seemed almost forced by his personality into giving him more than my bargain, into letting him into my sacred places, while I sat on the outside doorstep of his. My anxiety for George's future seemed foolish in the sight and hearing of his and Marcelle's brightness, but the revolt in my own soul was growing. We had come to a difficult rocky bit of path. Paul in two long strides stood at the top and held out his hand to help me. I jumped up pretending not to see it. When his faculties were awake his tact was perfect. I know not how he led me away from ourselves, but never at any time have I known him more entirely intellectual, more impersonal. This was the rest, the change I needed. And then when he found how my morning had been spent with St. Augustine, he repeated to me by heart almost the whole of the great scene at Ostia.

"It annoys me," he said, "to see them represented as sitting, in the ordinary pictures. They were standing: 'It came to pass,' he quoted, 'Thyself as I believe by Thy secret ways so ordering it that she and I stood alone leaning in a certain window'."

And then he went on with an intonation and power I have never heard equalled. I hardly noticed after that how the strong delicate hands helped me to jump from rock to rock as we came down the steep side of the hill, until just as we neared the bottom he suddenly bent over and kissed my fingers.

"Pardon," he said, with a curious thrill in his voice, and although at that moment I recognised my bonds, I was not

unhappy. Paul d'Etranges, then and always, had the gift of being forgiven, although he might be only dimly conscious for how much he had to ask forgiveness.

I wonder, as I think it over now, with unprofitable wondering what would have happened if we had gone on together for a longer time at Peak Hall, and Madame de Pourcelles had come to join us. As it was our time was short and full. Marcelle had accepted George on the twelfth, and on the sixteenth he and Paul were to start for the Congress, stopping for a day or two in London, as Paul was to visit my mother from there. As it was, the fifteenth, the Feast of the Assumption, and the eve spent in preparation for it, were two of the happiest days of all our lives. The little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, had passed away with the actual rain; our last days together at Peak Hall were cloudless. We spent most of the time all four together, and we had much to say. We talked, as we had used to talk, of our cause and our aims, and we were full of hope. Paul and George were intensely keen about the Congress. Some of the greatest thinkers in the Church, and in the world, were to assemble at it. Paul was to read an address, George was to be made known by him to Paul's continental friends. They were to be thrown into an entirely sympathetic atmosphere.

We took immense pains with the chapel, and with the music for the feast. I never shall hear the *Assumpta est Maria* sung by the most gorgeous choir without a hankering for that day, when we four sang it up to the summer sky through the open windows of the little chapel, *Assumpta, assumpta est Maria*. Were we not full of joy, light, peace? It was an interlude. A little space of earthly and heavenly joy combined. And it had immense uses. It would seem as if Our Lady, not wishing to interfere too much with our mistakes, our follies, the working out of our salvation amidst

life's painful circumstance, does from time to time obtain a complete holiday for her children.

"I have never seen Paul enjoy a feast like this before ; it is your doing, Lisa." We were coming out of the chapel as Marcelle spoke. A glow of hope and joy filled my mind. As she spoke Paul came towards us. We went to meet him and he took my hand in his.

"*Tu es contente ?*" he said, quite tenderly, and in his native tongue for the first time to me.

Marcelle called, "George, where are you?"

He came to us in the dark passage, and I smiled my happiness to him. He took Marcelle's hand, and we stood for a moment opposite to each other, we two couples.

"*Gaudeamus omnes in Domino,*" "Let us all rejoice in the Lord," sang George in a sudden outburst, from the Introit of the Mass, which we had just sung together in the chapel. *Gaudeamus*, we all sang together once again.

"Let us spend every Feast of the Assumption here together," said Marcelle. "May we not, Paul? May we not? And sing *Gaudeamus* and *Assumpta est Maria* just we four together. Paul, do say that we may."

I can hear her voice close to me now. And we were in fact never to sing *Gaudeamus* together again.

PART II.

I.

NEXT morning we were up early to see the three men start. Father Duly was to go with Paul and George to the Congress.

I came down after the others, and found Mr. Sutcliffe standing by the door. "D'Etranges has mislaid the MS. of his address for the Congress at the last moment," he said. "Marcelle is hunting for it; he says he knows it is in his bedroom. Miss Fairfax, stay a moment"—he led me on to the terrace—"I want to beg your pardon for what I said the day we met in the train. I understand now. I know how happy you are. I am horribly ashamed of myself. Do you think you can forget, really forget all I said? I was ill and morbid. I understand Paul much better after this week. I was never so intimate with him before. May I? Will you let me congratulate you really and truly now?"

I looked up into his earnest dark eyes and smiled. But I think, I may be wrong, that something of the unconscious strain I was living in showed in my face; and then a sudden recollection of Mary's especial mistake made me colour.

"You don't really forgive me?" he pleaded.

"Indeed, indeed I do," I cried. "My own family made the same mistake—exactly the same mistake."

"I shall write and give you both an account of Paul at the Congress," he said.

"Yes, yes, do write us everything."

"And bygones are really and truly bygones?" he insisted, as he heard the others coming.

"They are already forgotten," I said, a little solemnly.

It was a wonderful summer's morning on which Paul and George started.

Marcelle and I felt when they had gone, that the weather and the circumstances justified dawdling under the elms at the bottom of the garden.

"There is a sense of freedom in having parted with them," she said, while a tear still lingered on her eyelashes. "Too much happiness is like too much sweet cake. I feel as if I wanted to swim in a rough sea or climb some rocks. What a comfort that Paul has such a friend! I used to fear his being dropped into something—the sea, or a river, or a boiler, but *le cher* George wouldn't allow it. Ah, Lisa, it is sweet to think of us all four together! I love to see Paul looking at you. I am not jealous when his eyes seem to talk to you and to say, '*Du bist meine Ruh*,' as they do sometimes. I always thought I should be horribly, cruelly jealous of Paul's wife," she clenched her hand tightly as she spoke, "but I love you too much to mind. Besides, I am far too happy myself."

I could not answer her. I thought her candour had failed her for the first time. Could she have been happy had she not been secure of being first with Paul?

A small boy was passing down the road, and he was visible to us through the garden gate, holding a letter in his hand.

"It's old Mrs. Monk's grandson," said Marcelle. "Tom, Tom," she called in her shrill tones, and she went to meet the boy.

It was a note from the doctor to the effect that the poor old woman could not live through the day, and that her mind was greatly troubled as to how she was to get a priest, as

there would be no priest at Peak Hall before the end of the week. Father Colnes was the nearest priest, but he lived some eight miles off, and the dog-cart had taken Paul and George to the station. Still there was a pony we sometimes rode, and I offered to go on it to fetch Father Colnes, while Marcelle went to reassure the dying woman. The pony was strong and fresh, and accustomed to the rough hills; he went almost as fast as I could wish, and I reached the little village before twelve o'clock. A small stone church in a wood, somewhat back from the village street, and apparently standing in private grounds, caught my eyes. I got off the pony, reflecting for the first time that my appearance in my ordinary clothes, with a rug tucked round me was a little strange. I gave the pony to a steady-looking boy and then made my way to a tiny house next the church. An untidy woman opened the door.

"Father Colnes is away," she said hurriedly, and my heart sank.

"It is for a sick call—a dying woman."

"Father Colnes is gone away and left no address. He went Sunday evening."

What on earth was I to do!

"There's Mrs. Stedman from the Manor, she'll tell you the same."

As she spoke a large elderly woman with a curiously sweet expression, the result I know now of more suffering than is the common lot, came towards the church. In my trouble I went to her and told her my story. She looked greatly disturbed.

"I cannot understand Father Colnes' movements at all."

Her tone was severe and reserved, and in spite of the sweetness of her expression, I felt myself included in the severity. I had told her my name and that I was staying at the d'Etranges, and I remembered that Father Colnes would certainly have told her of my engagement to the

Count. I felt inclined to refuse her offer of something to eat, but I knew I might have to go much farther in search of a priest, and I had better feed while I could. I think she was softened and surprised by my intense anxiety to get a priest.

"There is nothing to be done but to telegraph to the Bishop, and get him to send somebody over by train, then you could also telegraph for a fly to meet the train."

We looked out the trains and wrote the telegrams, and she sent them into the village. By her advice I waited for a reply from the Bishop. I became uncomfortable as time passed; I felt as if Father Colnes' conduct was somehow my fault.

"Father Colnes is a great friend of yours? He is quite devoted to the Comte d'Etranges." Her tone was hesitating.

At last she broke through her reserve, and confided to me how strange Father Colnes had been lately, so excited and neglectful, that he only said Mass on Sundays, and last Sunday had announced that he was too ill to say Mass, and had then left suddenly, although he knew Father Duly was away. His sermons had been so singular and incomprehensible, and in private he quoted the Comte d'Etranges in the strangest way, but one of course did not rely on what he said. Then at last came a further burst of confidence. She had only just had a letter from Father Colnes to say that he would never come back—that he intended to leave the Catholic Church. I turned faint and giddy as she spoke.

"But why, why?" I gasped in horror and amazement.

"You had better read it, it is evidently not private."

I remember very distinctly the ordinary country gentlefolk-look of the drawing-room—chintz and flowers, the old lady intensely neat, with sweet, spiritual eyes and a narrow forehead and thin lips. It was in these surroundings that I

read the maddest rigmarole it was ever my lot to read. It was like a nightmare of Paul's talk, with a horribly conceited intellectual strut. There was Kant and Hegel and Comte and Lamennais and the mind of the human race, and the true Catholicism all in a hideous jumble. I knew just enough to see it was nonsense, and yet it was beyond my powers to disentangle the parody of Paul's thoughts from the original.

"But he is out of his mind!" I cried.

"I wish I could think so," said my companion dryly.

"How dare he misrepresent the Count like this?"

She sniffed. "He has talked like that and almost preached like that ever since he first visited Peak Hall. Canon Markham said it must end in this way if he went to Peak Hall."

I had heard of Canon Markham as the narrowest and the most intolerant of men, and the *bête noire* of Father Duly and the younger clergy. The old lady was crying quietly, or I should have been carried away by my wrath. I wanted to hear more.

"He said you couldn't drench yourself with false philosophy and indulge in a rebellious temper and still keep a Catholic, and he was quite right. You must see for yourself, Miss Fairfax, that he was quite right."

"I don't see anything of the kind," I cried hotly. "There are no better Catholics in the world than at Peak Hall. It is not Paul's fault that Father Colnes is a weak man without brain enough to understand the things he ought to leave alone."

"That was just it; they gave him things he ought to have left alone."

There was the weak point in my armour, for there she was perfectly right. Marcelle had said during Father Colnes' first visit: "Paul will do him no good, he doesn't really understand. I wish he would go back to his parish."

"He has been mad about that *Review* Canon Markham hates so. The Canon says the *Review* must be stopped one way or another. Perhaps this scandal of Father Colnes may stop it. Good often does come out of evil."

At this remark I laughed aloud with great bitterness, to my companion's astonishment.

"Why, three of the bishops have written to congratulate the editor quite lately."

She only repeated, "Canon Markham said it would have to be condemned".

It was impossible to dissociate in her mind Father Colnes' conduct and the *Catholic International Review*. I felt furious, and deadly sad and sick. It was no use to talk, and I leant back and shut my eyes. I then suggested a visit to the church, which, I think, surprised her. It was small and ugly, and I remember the tabernacle had a door of the quartz found in those parts. There I poured out my trouble, my intercession for the old woman far out on the moors dying without the Sacraments; my prayer for Paul to be spared the danger of unfair pressure from narrow minds. Above the altar hung a dim picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel—the old mediæval picture of the Loving Mother waiting for the Divine Wisdom of her Child and her God to be whispered into her ears from the infant lips pressing so near them.

It seemed to me that in thinking of Our Lady as the most loving and gentlest of women I had never quite realised that she must be too the wisest, the most intellectual, if the word is not disrespectful. She must understand the mental lives of her children, their sorrows, their struggles, as no other could. Filled with Divine light and knowledge, she would tenderly pity the little seekings and soundings of the greatest but also of the very smallest minds. She knew what I suffered that day; she knew what the weak, undisciplined Father Colnes had suffered in that chapel.

"Oh, Mother of Knowledge, and of Love, of fair hope and

of wisdom, pray for him and for Paul, for George, Marcelle and me."

A moment later a telegram was brought to me: "Canon Markham goes to Peak Hall by the 2 o'clock train".

It was a huge relief. My new acquaintance saw me mount my pony, and encouraged by seeing me pray, and therefore thinking that I might be saved even from the influences at Peak Hall, she ventured on a well-meant suggestion.

"If you ever want anybody, to consult, I mean," she hesitated, "in any intellectual difficulty or anything of the kind—Canon Markham is so clever and so kind."

"Thank you," I said; "but I think if ever I am in want of advice I should prefer the Bishop or the priest at my own home—or possibly we might all go to Rome. I hope that if Canon Markham is unhappy about anything—the *Review*, for instance—he will go and consult Rome too. It would be so interesting to meet him there." I bowed stiffly and then felt myself unladylike. "We must all pray for Father Colnes, mustn't we? I am so very, very sorry for you here."

But Mrs. Stedman was now offended, and she only answered stiffly, "Oh, thank you; Canon Markham will send us somebody else, I am sure. He is Vicar-General you know, and has a great deal of power in his own hands. Good-bye, good-bye."

I have been all my life too easily discouraged by a hostile atmosphere. I ran away from my first party as a girl because I could not stand the intangible sense of not being liked. And the chance revelation of hostility on the part of Mrs. Stedman unmanned me. I saw too clearly the point of view from which she and Canon Markham would suspect us, and while passionately resenting it, it crushed my imagination. That day was my foretaste of the sense of

misunderstanding, condemnation, rash judgments, things always hard to bear, but surely doubly hard when they relate to things most sacred: when it is exactly the noblest work, the highest aims of your life that are misunderstood. I think it must be—it is surely right—that the subtle sensitiveness of the Catholic mind should be easily made anxious as to what is new, or human nature being what it is, it might fall in love with every novelty. But to those whose whole duty it is to go forward, and especially to the women who must be with them—for there are women involved in all the actions of men—what subtle tortures may be applied! As I rode home tired and alone I experienced this for the first time. I foresaw in a vague mist much of what was to come, and I think I was calmer afterwards for the fore-suffering. I thought of the pious lady and the condemning Canon able to console themselves for the apostacy of Father Colnes by shaking their heads over Paul and the modern thinkers, and then of many pious women and groups of theologians. I saw a storm gathering and bursting on the devoted heads of a little group of men entirely single-minded and high-souled, a little knot of men who, looking out from the fortress had seen that a great and powerful enemy was nearer than was supposed—an enemy with new weapons, with guns of strange power with which they would plant their balls in the very heart of the fortress, ignoring the old defences of centuries, not troubling to attack the carefully defended walls thick with theologians. And then this little knot were misjudged and called traitors because they wanted to study the methods of the enemy. Last of all, was there any danger of any of those men failing under the double fire of friends and enemies, leaving the fortress and becoming traitors to all that was most sacred and most binding?

I remember I got off my pony in my great trouble, and let it nibble the grass by my side while I sat on a tuft of heather

in the shade. As I sat there, my face buried in my hands, fancying these things bitterly, I heard the trot of horses feet breaking the great stillness of the moors and crashing through the low hum of insect life close beside me. In a moment I saw our dog-cart being driven hard, very hard, along the road from the station, and it soon flashed past me, the gardener touching his hat. I knelt down hastily and made the sign of the cross, for I saw it was Canon Markham taking the Blessed Sacrament to the dying woman out on the moors beyond Peak Hall. I could not move after he had passed. I felt that on my knees was my only safe attitude.

How little was everything else beside the thought of death, and of Our Lord, first by the deathbed, and then in the heart of the dying woman. A great light was in the sunlight that had not been before; a great peace was in my troubled heart; my mind dwelt on the hovel whither He was going, the foolish, tired old woman, the Divine Comforter, and the "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord".

There was the Church in action; she is always asked the question that was asked of the first Peter:—

"Lovest thou Me?"

"Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee."

"Then feed My sheep: Feed My lambs."

II.

WHEN I got back to Peak Hall I was told that Marcelle was still with Mrs. Monk. The gardener had heard that Canon Markham had been in time. When Marcelle met me, I could see on her face the marks of recent tears.

"It was all so beautiful, so touching, so simple!" she began. "I almost cried with joy when I saw a fine, dark, evidently priestly man coming up the rough path. Mrs. Monk was quieter while I watched through the door. I had already done her good by arranging the altar and lighting the candles, and making her feel that somebody would come soon. It is wonderful to see those last Sacraments, little Lisa. I was particularly struck by the greatness of the pageant when the Church Militant gives up her charge and bids all the great ones in heaven—the Church Triumphant—to come out and welcome the soul she is yielding up!"

I was silent for a moment. "And is Canon Markham here?"

"No, he was in a hurry; and what stiff, impossible manners men do have! He would not have tea or coffee or anything; he said he must go over and see if Father Colnes were ill. He asked for Father Duly's address at the Congress, and then demanded if the dog-cart would take him to Mrs. Stedman's. I think he was very angry with Father Colnes, but he needn't have been angry with me. It was not my fault, was it? I think what annoyed him most was

my asking affectionately for the Bishop; but how could it be impertinent, Lisa?"

I felt immensely relieved at the Canon's departure. At first I was incapable of telling Marcelle my bad news. It was a comfort at last to get it out, but her unhappiness only added depth to mine.

"Oh, if Father Colnes had never, never come here! I knew he could not stand Paul—I saw it the very first night. I tried to make Paul see it, but he could not, or he would not. It is too horrible! Lisa, Paul *will* think everybody has as much brain as he has himself! He never can see that it is not truth at all they receive; they get drunk, not nourished!"

From the plural pronoun I gathered this was not an entirely new experience to Marcelle, which made it the more painful, but I dared not question her.

"That is the comfort in George Sutcliffe!" she cried. "He has his own thoughts, his own position; but these people with second-hand knowledge, second-hand positions, second-hand enthusiasms, and first-hand intellectual pride without an intellect to keep it in! They are a nuisance! Oh, Lisa, isn't it too awful! A priest! Think of what he is now, and what his future will be!"

We went to the chapel, and then we worked hard and resolved not to talk, and after all we talked half the night. Next day we over-walked ourselves for relief, and then we were too restless to rest.

Several days passed before we heard from Paul and George. We read slowly, eating our breakfasts and reading bits of our letters aloud to one another. How perfectly pleased we were after our two days of gloom and depression, haunted by Father Colnes and our anxiety for the future. Women who depend much on men are apt to run down in their absence and take gloomy views. What a fresh, broad, Catholic international horizon seemed to open about us as we read. How proud and happy and loyal we felt!

After breakfast we rushed out like children with our letters, and read them again and again. Mine from Paul was short, but it made its own clear, cool, starlight impression. Marcelle had pretty blushes over hers from George. It was a delicate touch, that while George pictured Paul to Marcelle Paul had many phrases about George in writing to her. "George's articles are much appreciated by many of the congressists." "I wish Sutcliffe had written a paper, many of our best men here wish to know him better," are bits that I recall. Paul's little note shall speak for itself:—

"After night prayers and a visit to the Cathedral, dear little lady, I will bid you good-night. The thought of you is my haven and my evening star, and many more metaphors mixed, but not the less conveying a clear picture of you to my soul. That poor soul is tired but hopeful; there are here so many who love truth and the things of the mind."

I must put that letter back in its drawer, it makes too strong an impression on me now, making me wonder, whereas I only want to remember. We lived those days on letters, and it was our greatest pleasure to drive over to the post office, four miles off, to fetch them for ourselves. I will put down in a separate chapter those parts of George's letters to Marcelle, given to me long afterwards, which tell the story of the Congress for the advantage of those who wish to get a connected account of it, and for the convenience of others who would rather leave it out altogether. It must be remembered that on these intellectual and even technical matters the fate of our lives happened curiously enough to depend.

III.

“SCHWEIZERHOF, F——, 22nd August.

“I WRITE this late at night. We arrived about five in the afternoon. This little University town is *en fête* for the Congress—flags, banners and arches in the streets—everything as though a royal visit was expected. There are a large number of regulars in their habits, Franciscans and Benedictines as well as the Dominicans of the University. There are many bishops and prelates in purple. All this gives the place the appearance of a resurrection from the Middle Ages. We are in luck with our company in the hotel. Choiseul, the great biblical critic, is here with heaps to tell us of the attacks of the *Intransigents* on his new book, and passages at arms with his bishop on the subject.

“Dupont, the historian, is here too—a second Gibbon or Voltaire he would appear to Canon Markham, I confess; but I am told he says a most devout Mass, and he looks a thorough priest in his *soutane*. Then there is Achard, the philosopher, the man who tests all truth by its power to live. We five dined together, and it was curious to see how the serious, slow, incisive sentences of Paul gradually commanded attention. At the beginning of dinner Dupont and Choiseul led the talk. By the end there was an instinctive feeling that a subject was not really dealt with until Paul had given his deliberate, matured verdict. His combination of philosophic thought with really considerable knowledge in history and exegesis, gives him great power.

He blends the thought of the other three in an attractively picturesque and effective manner. Paul, nevertheless, with all his accent of deliberation, ventilated some theories on facts of the Old Testament which seemed to me far beyond the evidence available.

"But his gravity and conviction, and his extraordinary power of marshalling his facts and making them tell to the best advantage, impressed me irresistibly at the moment. It was only in the watches of the night that I felt the theories would not stand without his living personality to back them. I believe, however, that his paper, which he reads on Wednesday, is quite sober and balanced.

"We attend the first *séance* of the Congress at ten to-morrow morning."

"23rd August, 18—.

"It has been an interesting day. We assembled in the great hall of the University at ten. The Bishop of Chur presided. He gave a fine but rather vague address on the Church and modern civilisation. The keynote was development and assimilation, dominated and limited by the ever-living genius of Christianity.

"The life of a Church is like that of a man. A man ought to acquire all the knowledge he can, and to adapt himself to all circumstances of life and of the age in which he lives and yet remain *himself*—not be overwhelmed by his knowledge or by the ideas he assimilates. These ideas and this knowledge should be used to make his own character and powers impress themselves more deeply on others—assert themselves more effectively. So too the Church should assimilate modern culture not so as to be carried away by it, not so as to be *modernised*, but so as to make the ancient and ever-abiding genius of Christianity express itself more effectively. The Bishop is a tall, ascetic-looking man, and the whole address was very impressive.

“Dupont came in the afternoon, and was very interesting on Christian antiquities, destroying many of my cherished idols. I'm not sure but that some of them may reappear some day in their old niches.

“The discussion on Dupont was good, and Paul took part in it—weighty and impressive sentences arranged with the clearness of Euclid, self-contained and brief. He was well listened to. His own paper is to be read to-morrow. It was at first to be read in one of the smaller rooms devoted to the *sections spéciales*, but the President has read the paper, and thinks it of such general interest and so moderate in its conclusions, that there is every reason to have it in the large hall, which can be managed by a slight rearrangement of the programme. He says it will interest many, and that there is nothing in it which would shock the general public, which is unfitted for some of the more startling specialist speculations—such as Choiseul's.

“Two interesting arrivals—both, if I may so express it, accidental—Bowman, my old and very able Cambridge Agnostic friend, and Cardinal Mattei. Bowman was touring in Switzerland and came here knowing nothing of the Congress. He is already quite amazed at the openness of mind and thought, as well as the actual learning of Choiseul, Dupont and their friends. It seems quite to puzzle him in members of the ‘fossil’ Church. Cardinal Mattei, as you know, is the right hand of the Cardinal Secretary of State, and is bound for Paris on a mission to the French Government. He has made out who Paul is, and they are now deep in political talk. Of course Paul's old friendship with the French *Premier* goes still for a good deal. They were like brothers at college, and worked together in political life for a short time, and in spite of Paul's new interest in religion the friendship continues. The Cardinal is in appearance the beau ideal of a Cardinal diplomat—charming to every one, with a host of pretty phrases—I hardly knew

such a variety existed—ready for every person and occasion. When we presented Choiseul to him, he gave us all to understand that the whole of Europe rang with his name, and that he (the Cardinal) had on meeting him at last attained the heart's desire, so long unsatisfied. When he saw 'The Athenæum' on my card, he gave a most picturesque sketch of a visit he once paid there, and how he saw Huxley at one side of the library fire; Manning at the other; Gladstone reading at the opposite side of the room; Roberts and Wolseley near him also reading; in short, he had seen all that was most eminent in talent, achievement and influence in England—'and therefore in the world,' he added, gathered together in that library. 'You are one of a great company.' To Paul he spoke at first of his family and of his father, the Ambassador, whom he had known, but he was soon quick enough to find where Paul's heart and his pride were now placed, and he expressed the deepest interest in the future of biblical exegesis and historical theology. When he heard Paul was to read his paper to-morrow, we thought he would have to chant the *Te Deum* or the *Magnificat* to relieve his ecstasies of joy, such was its apparent strength. I think Paul takes his sympathy too seriously."

"24th August.

"I write this late at night after a very interesting day. Paul's address came off this afternoon. Was it a success? You shall hear, and judge for yourself. It has certainly made him at once far the most important personage at the Congress.

"I will first mention a little incident of the morning. I could not go to hear the whole of the morning's discussion as Paul wanted me for the final revision of his paper. But I looked in for a quarter of an hour. In the row just in front of me was Cardinal Mattei—who says he must be present at these invaluable intellectual tournaments, but *sans*

façon and as a private person. I had not before realised what a mobile expression he has. His face had a look of great annoyance when I came in. Schweppe, the rough, plain-spoken Belgian, was talking. I afterwards made out that he had just made some playful remarks about the Roman Curia, à propos to a rather foolish utterance of an official personage on some historical question. And he had concluded this episode in his speech by saying that in spite of all the honour due to the *Curia*, we must remember that '*Rome est un centre d'autorité. Elle n'est pas nécessairement un centre de lumière.*' I mention this as in my mind I connect it with what happened later on. When I spoke to the Cardinal his face at once became wreathed in smiles. And when later on I tried to see if Schweppe's words had annoyed him, I found it quite impossible to bring him to the point. He seemed to think that no such words had been spoken. Still his expression as I entered was quite unmistakable.

"In the afternoon came the great address. M. Julier, who presided, introduced Paul in a flattering speech, and he was well listened to. Paul's subject was the necessity of freedom for science, and he treated it very temperately and (an odd thing to say) picturesquely. He drew the picture of the devoted specialist in each department of scientific research, a recluse, in some sense an apostle, of his devotion to his own science, how it was to him something precious and ideal, how he treated with reverent care each new contribution towards the perfection of his method, how interference from without was to him a sacrilege, how his little microscope (as it were) was, in the small area in which his work was carried on, the one instrument for obtaining the truth. Then he raised the obvious objection that men of science may contradict theological conclusions, and he replied much in Newman's lines that they must nevertheless be allowed to proceed in their own way, as their research, although it

may lead to temporary error, is the only road to scientific truth, and to check their researches is to cramp the scientific mind and prevent it from reaching its goal. Then finally he gave a very fine peroration on all the sciences progressing towards a great synthesis of knowledge, towards the unity which they already possess in the Divine mind, while man with his partial view of things, constantly finds the human representations of each department for the time partially inconsistent with one another.

"He touched, I must add, in illustration of the freedom necessary for scientific research, on physics, on history, and on biblical criticism. But he advocated the absolute freedom he claimed for each provisionally, *i.e.*, as a means of reaching the best which each science has to say. He did not touch on the subsequent attitude of theology.

"All went well in the discussion at first. Dupont emphatically complimented him on his address, and another speech followed in a similar strain. Then a very stupid Dutchman, Professor van Eyck, got up and fastened on the biblical question. He entirely missed Paul's points, but insisted that modern biblical criticism opposed in its methods the Catholic view of inspiration, and therefore could not be tolerated, even provisionally.

"He gave a pedantic account of the different views on inspiration which were allowed in the schools—very prolix, very dull, very unenlightening. On the very lowest view, he said, the Bible was inspired in its main facts and opinions—the *res et sententiæ*, to use the theological phrase. In these there could be no error. If, as d'Etranges affirmed, the author of the Pentateuch used historical documents marked by human deficiencies and inaccuracies, this must mean that it was not inspired as to the *res et sententiæ*. So too if evolution were accepted as the Count accepted it, the *res et sententiæ* of Genesis were false—nay the dogma of creation was denied. If there were error in the *res et sententiæ* of

the inspired books—he exclaimed in accents of holy horror—‘God is the author of error, for these books have God for their author’. He quoted Trent and the Vatican Council: he quoted the fathers: he quoted theologians and laboured for three-quarters of an hour to prove the obvious—namely, that the Divine authorship was of faith. He wound up with a denunciation of the pride of the human reason which could not submit itself, and rebelled against the Word of God Himself.

“It was all profoundly irritating to Paul, and completely missed the drift of his argument. He had said in effect—first accumulate the assured and probable results of modern criticism, then let the theologians calmly consider them as they considered Copernicanism when it was established beyond doubt. In 1616 the theologians of the Inquisition declared it to be formally heretical. After it had been proved, they so revised their theological analysis as to do away with the alleged discrepancy between the teaching of Scripture and of Astronomy. Let them now study modern criticism with a view to repeating the process of correction when it is necessary. The Bible is the Divine source, not of secular science, physical or historical, but of Christian theology and devotion. This argument van Eyck entirely ignored, while he laboured combatively and self-righteously at showing the obvious—namely, that the theological analysis prevalent before the development of biblical criticism was inconsistent with some of its results, just as the theological propositions of 1616 were inconsistent with Galileo’s theory.

“Paul rose at once to reply instead of waiting for further speeches. His tone betrayed irritation and had in it a vein of irony. He began with a dramatic analysis of the mind of a pre-Copernican theologian, for which the movements of sun and planets were rebellious inventions of the human reason, obviously opposed to *res et sententiæ* in the book of

Joshua and elsewhere in the Bible. 'What has now become of these infallible *res et sententiæ*? What was the fate of self-righteous dogmatism?' he asked. He summarised briefly and incisively the most obvious and undeniable proofs of the incorporation into the Old Testament of pre-existing historical documents. 'Study them,' he said, 'and show me where I am to look for the infallible *res et sententiæ*. One document contradicts another, all betray the historical peculiarities of the period. I ask the theologians to measure these facts. I point out in all friendliness that their present measuring tape is not long enough, and that they need a longer one. What was long enough for the known facts of 1300 was not long enough for those of 1800; what sufficed for 1800 will not suffice for 1880. M. van Eyck in reply unfolds with painful slowness the tape of our fathers, and proves in the end what I stated at the outset, that it is *not* long enough.'

"This point of view was of course familiar to me and to the specialists present. But I began to feel nervous as to its effects on the mass of hearers. I hoped Paul would now sit down. But no.

" 'I have not yet done,' he said, in a voice which made me start. He was now thoroughly roused. While he read his paper he had stooped, and the effect of his height had been lost. He seemed almost a short man. Now, towering above every one in the assembly, he appeared to grow taller and taller as his animation increased. His words penetrated to the extreme end of the hall, and Choiseul, who was near the door, told me he heard them as though he had been sitting close by.

" 'So far,' he said, 'I have dwelt with the obvious, the incontrovertible. But there is much more which we must face as possible. We must realise the position of modern critics as a whole.' And forthwith, he gave with that intuitive drift towards paradox which comes when he is

aroused, some of the most startling positions of Kuenen and Wellhausen which I will not distress you by detailing. After describing at length some four or five he went on: 'Are such ideas true or are they false? I will not answer. Science goes her way. She will in due course give the answer with approximate accuracy. But I do say that the Church, the Ark of God, can rise above, and live, in spite of such facts, if facts they be. They are not waves which will destroy her; on the contrary, they will sustain her. It is not God's way to do all by miracle. It is not His will to still the tempest lest it destroy the Ark. He has done what is more wonderful. He has made an Ark which can sail in any tempest, which bounds unscathed over the breakers which seem to weak, timorous minds inevitably destructive. The Ark as of old shall hold the 'testimony of the Lord': the Church shall preserve the Bible. We do not want a halting, trembling theology—a theology of *res et sententiæ*, which will not allow science to face facts, and which regards the Church as so frail a barque that the truth will overwhelm her. No, we want brave theologians, and a thorough science, and rising above the thoughts and speculations of both, we see with eyes of faith the Ark of God, the Barque of Peter—Rome above all, majestic, undisturbed, rebuking those who would still the storm—"Lord, save us, we perish"—using to them the words of Christ, "Ye of little faith. Know ye not that I am here?"'

"Then dropping his voice and falling to his usual stature, he said to van Eyck in the words of Shylock, 'Now sir, are you answered?'

"The chairman was fully alive to the difficulty of the situation, and with great tact, at once treated Paul's speech as his final reply, which, according to the rules of procedure, closed the debate. The three points which redeemed Paul's speech from being disastrous were (1) that his startling theories were put forward merely as what the critics had

said, and hypothetically, with no serious suggestion that they would prove true; (2) that the large bulk of this part of the speech could only be understood by the specialists; (3) that the peroration on the Church and on Rome came last, and was intelligible to the mass, and was such a fine piece of rhetoric that he sat down amid thunders of applause. Still for a few minutes Choiseul and I were very anxious. We knew that there were several intransigent and clever theologians present. And then there was Cardinal Mattei.

"But my anxiety on this last score was soon allayed. As I went out some five minutes later (I had remained talking to Dupont) I found Mattei walking with Paul, and overheard the most enthusiastic epithets. His arm was linked in Paul's. He called him '*mon cher*' constantly.

"Cardinal Mattei left that night, with a letter from Paul in his pocket to the French Premier. Paul told me afterwards that the Cardinal had endorsed every word of his address, and when Paul had complained of the narrowness of theologians, he had said to him most affectionately: 'Come to Rome if they trouble you. Rome is the friend of science. Your beautiful comparison is true. She remains calm and serene, rising above these discussions, permitting them and overruling them.'

"Paul, who has no sense of humour, was simply profoundly impressed by all this. And I had not the heart to tell him what I thought—that the Cardinal was a diplomatist, and not much of a theologian, and that his promises were more remarkable for their sympathetic quality than for good wear. However, he was a Godsend at the moment. Van Eyck's friends, seeing the Cardinal's attitude, made no attempt to combine or to do anything, and so the net result of one of the most startling theological dissertations I ever heard was a triumph—and this at a Catholic Congress."

IV.

ONE morning, absorbed in what George had to tell her, Marcelle left another letter unnoticed lying on her plate. When at length it was opened it proved to be very important. She stared at it a moment and then gave a shriek.

"Lisa, Lisa, only think! But it is too extraordinary! too delightful! too absurd! Father Colnes is back again; he has gone to the Bishop, and is broken-hearted! It has been a five days' affair. *Deo gratias*. Oh, what a relief!"

She jumped up and ran round and kissed me, and then began to dance about the room—making a truly hideous noise. I felt what the strain had been, and sat still as if suddenly immensely rested and refreshed. I took the letter and read it.

"But, Marcelle, I am sorry about Father Duly."

Her face changed. She looked aghast. "You don't mean—I had not read the rest—that Father Duly has gone off too?"

I laughed scornfully. "What nonsense! What absurdity! Only that he is to be removed to a distant parish. I am sure it is Canon Markham's doing. It is for fear of Paul."

This was serious trouble. Father Duly had become a dear, and we knew him to be a true, friend.

"But Paul has done him no harm."

"No, indeed; he has done him all the good in the world. It is a shame, just because Father Colnes had a fit of hysterics that we should lose Father Duly."

I think I wanted a grievance against Canon Markham. I resented his attitude much more now that the terror of Father Colnes' apostasy was passed. Dear Father Duly! The bright, genial Irishman, with his elastic mind, his sympathy, his intense breezy Catholicism, his immense shrewdness, his open air yet safe handling of the deepest problems. We were torn by extremes of relief for Father Colnes and regret for Father Duly all the morning. At last Marcelle struck out an idea.

"Why be too resigned?" she said. "Why not go to the Bishop and speak? Ask him to leave us Father Duly. I do not believe it is the Bishop. No, it is that grim, grimy horrid Scotch Canon who meditates on hell for heretics every morning and heaven for theologians every evening. We will go and keep hold on *ce cher petit père Duly—allons tout de suite, il faut prendre le train.*"

There was some sense in her idea that we had better go at once, while Paul and George were still abroad. A purely feminine appeal to a paternal Bishop might succeed and could do no harm.

In the afternoon we drove to the station and caught a train to Leeds. The gloomy regularity of the streets, the spirit of awful dulness that pervades the great town seemed to be in possession of the big plain parlour, with pseudo-Gothic windows, in which we waited for the Bishop. Then, an inner door opening, we turned to see him enter, and to our great embarrassment saw Father Colnes looking frightfully ill, followed by Canon Markham. I had hardly seen him in the dog-cart, but this man was so exactly what I expected, only more so—the narrow forehead, hooked nose, hard piercing eyes with no depth in them. Father Colnes looked at us in astonishment, then shook hands in an ordinary gentlemanly manner, but Canon Markham bowed and seemed inclined to skirt the room at as great a distance from us as possible. Marcelle bowed to him with a truly magnificent

politeness, every inch a woman of the great world. It was absurd, but they left the room without another word. I felt furiously angry at the want of Christianity and the want of breeding. Marcelle was quite cool. "What else do you expect from *cette espèce*?" she muttered in a low voice.

A moment later there was a long quick step outside and the Bishop was with us. I felt at once the softening effect of the kindness of a really holy man. Anger, hardness, restlessness melted in me as I heard his voice, as I saw the gentle friendliness with which he greeted us.

"Thank God," he said, almost at once after he had sat down with us at a big bare table, "he is back safe and very sorry;—sorry and very safe. It was a fit of hysterical excitement. I am grateful to the Count, your brother, mademoiselle, for a splendid scolding he sent him," he smiled genially, "such a rating no ecclesiastical superior could have ventured upon! Such language!" He crossed his legs, rearranged the cassock on his knees and laughed at the thought.

I am sure our faces beamed with pleasure. Then we asked about Father Duly, helping each other out with short, shy sentences. He listened, his face growing graver, and when we had finished—

"It is not my doing," he said, "nor, indeed, anybody's." I am sure he was thinking of Canon Markham. "It is his own."

We both exclaimed.

"Yes," he said; "and under the circumstances I think it right to show you both his letter."

He handed it to Marcelle, who held it out so that we could read it together. It began on business, of which we knew nothing, then it went on to ask the Bishop to move him to another parish. He spoke first of the immense regret he should feel at leaving the d'Etranges, and a eulogy followed of Marcelle's work among the poor, of the Count's generosity in all financial matters, and of the great goodness

unworldliness and high-minded manner of his and his sister's lives. "But," he went on, "personally, I find the society of Peak Hall too absorbing. It interferes with my work. I am drawn into subjects, questions, views that would need all, and more than all, the study I should be equal to, if I could give my whole life to them. I feel it dangerous to dabble in such things, and it is not my vocation to go deeper. I have been confirmed in this view by the wonderful and delightful Congress I am attending here. The problems of the present moment must be the work of specialists such as these, not of amateurs." Then followed a very brief description of the Congress, ending with: "I should be glad for your Lordship to know, and for those about you, especially Canon Markham to know, that Cardinal Mattei has in every way shown his friendship and favour for my great friend the Comte d'Etranges. All my life I shall feel grateful to that great man for his kindness and the immense good he has done me in soul and mind. But his vocation is for thought and speech, mine for action. If I might, not at once, but in a few months time, be sent to work in the slums of one of our great towns, I should be very grateful for another proof of your Lordship's consideration."

"Then he need not go at once," ventured Marcelle, with a blushing countenance as she finished. She always showed instantly her pleasure at any praise of her brother or herself with absolute simplicity.

The Bishop looked grave. "We are just in need of such a man as Father Duly in our own worst slums here, and Canon Markham" (of course it was Canon Markham!), "who is much interested in the work of that parish, has asked to have him at once."

It was a blow given as kindly as possible, but it was of no use disguising from ourselves that the real sting of the thing for us lay in Father Duly's own action. We were silent; there was obviously no more to be said. The Bishop smiled

kindly at us both ; somehow I felt his Episcopal side more strongly as he did so.

"I wonder if you both see why I have shown you that letter?" he said. "It is because—I hope I am not intruding—but it is because I believe you both to be engaged to be married." He spoke genially, and I think we both looked genially conscious. "First I want to congratulate you very much," he looked chiefly at Marcelle as he spoke, then as if with a little effort turned to include me in the words. "I often have to congratulate young women who marry for the silliest reasons the silliest men, but you two are different. Your choice is not worldly, thank God for it—it is serious and Christian. But I want you both to take a lesson from Father Duly. You are both going to marry men who are the very specialists Father Duly speaks of. Well, he has enough knowledge to see that he cannot do a practical priest's work and be a specialist too. And I want you—it is my wedding sermon before the time—to realise that you cannot be specialists either. You have a commoner, but a greater, believe me it is a greater, work to do in the lives you have chosen." He paused a minute, we were both very grave, very grateful. "Even," he smiled a little, "even if you had had a scientific education, you would not be capable, for many years at any rate, of judging of these things for yourselves. Listen to your husbands if you like, they are not fools. It is not an old-fashioned view of a woman's position towards a man because he is a man that I am taking. But don't," he looked at me now, "don't talk historical criticism. Are you getting tired of my sermon?"

"No, no."

"Then there is another kind of talk. We are just now" (that of course was twenty years ago) "likely to have some bitter and difficult controversies. They will not be free from personalities. Now it is quite possible to keep out of the controversies, and to have a great deal to do with the person-

alities. It will rest a great deal in your hands whether there is bitterness or not. Don't, if you can help it"—he paused. I had been looking down, now I glanced up and saw him with a pained expression, a betrayal of spiritual suffering looking out of the window above our heads. "Don't, if you can help it, feel bitter. Your lot has been cast among a special section of Christ's flock; don't let yourselves give way to party spirit. True liberality is liberal-minded to those who appear to us illiberal. Don't think hardly of those who are in authority, pray for them. Their lot may be very hard; they may be forced to do things you cannot understand, you cannot from your position, your point of view think necessary. But it may be as painful to themselves as to you."

Then he sprang up with his peculiarly agile movements as if he could say no more. "I am afraid I cannot stay any longer, but I should like to show you the church. I have told them to get you some tea after that; you will have time before the 5.30 train, will you not?"

We were very awestruck, very quiet, as we went into the church. He had said he would show it to us, but instead, he went straight to the altar rails and knelt down, and we knelt in the front bench. His head was slightly bowed and his hands pressed on his thin grey-black hair. I thought he looked anxious and very weary. I am sure he was praying for us. Ten minutes passed, and he came to us and said, "I ought to go".

We followed him to the door.

"The new altar is worth looking at. Don't forget your tea. I have a committee meeting at five. God bless you, child, God bless you; pray for me."

Then as we kissed his ring, "Let us have a proper blessing," said Marcelle, and he blessed us in Latin as we knelt there.

"Love God and go your ways," he said, "and both be very happy." Smiling a farewell to us, he was gone.

V.

WITHIN three days of that visit I was at home again. I had had an alarm from Miss Mills as to my mother's health which made me anxious to be with her and judge for myself.

For a fortnight after I got back I had no thought of anything but my mother. I need not linger here on the private talks with our doctor, or the persuasions that had to be used to induce my mother to see a specialist, without frightening her. It was my comfort that my mother now turned to me in everything. Miss Mills was no longer the sole witness of her sufferings and her weariest hours. It is a sacred memory the intercourse of those weeks; my engagement in her eyes had made me a woman and an equal. She seemed to have forgotten her objections, her fears. She had been immensely charmed by Paul, I had gathered so much from her letter, and I was now convinced that he had come and seen and conquered in his flying visit before the Congress. I was now in her growing weakness filling a frame in her picture-gallery of life. I was already, it seemed, a married daughter. Mary was too generous and too anxious to feel this to be hard. I became almost entirely absorbed by my mother. I even let the new number of the *Catholic International* lie neglected on the hall table for days. But one day, when she seemed better than usual and not in need of me, I took it up to my room for a quiet read. I then intended to write to Paul and Marcelle. I had written very little these two weeks in answer to almost daily notes

from the brother or sister. Paul's as usual were brief but very gentle and sympathetic for my anxieties, very reverent towards my mother.

I settled myself in my arm-chair by the window for the enjoyment of Paul's article on the Congress. It was two weeks since my mind had had any food at all. At first I thoroughly enjoyed myself, then I was puzzled, then frightened, then aghast. I read to the end, put it down, walked about the room, took it up again; hoped against hope that I had failed to understand it. No, I had understood it but too well. It was apparently the address he had given at the Congress. But if so, what could George Sutcliffe have meant?

It was called "The Old Catholicism and the New". The existing theology was treated in it with sheer contempt. It seemed as though Catholics who understood the historical and biblical criticism of the day were regarded as having a different religion from their fellows. The value of authority even as a breakwater, as a witness to the older and deeper truths, as a principle of stability—all the Burkian line of thought which I had learnt from George Sutcliffe—was simply ignored. The scholastic theology was regarded not as a stage in the development of that theological science which was needed in order to protect and preserve the Christian revelation—a stage strongly marked by the intellectual characteristics of a special time—but as a grotesque aberration of the human intellect. The theologians were called upon, with a pistol to their heads, to "stand and deliver" under pain of intellectual death. The Catholicism of the future was to be formed not by the interaction of truths old and new, but simply by the personal opinions of Paul and his friends, of those who professed indeed to be Catholics, but whose intellectual views were almost exclusively determined by the peculiar tendencies and fashions of the present age. The Church was called upon to accept

Paul and Co. as her teachers, and on that condition they would love and praise and venerate her, but on no other! I give my woman's impressions of the article, but those impressions were very strong and definite.

The article was insolent and overbearing—it challenged combat while it scorned interference. What could it mean? What could George Sutcliffe mean by admiring this, and then by printing it in the review of which he was editor? Were both he and Paul actual rebels, barely Catholics, for an absolutely rebellious Catholic is a contradiction? Was Canon Markham right? Was it impossible to go deeply into science, into modern criticism and philosophy and keep your faith? Was this what Father Duly thought it best to leave alone? Was that what the Bishop meant by the controversies that were coming? Ah me, it was very different from anything I had foreseen! And yet (I took it up again), was it so entirely different from much that I knew Paul had said? Yes, it was; at the least it was wholly different from anything I had ever understood. It was one thing to wish for another attitude towards science, a friendlier intercourse with modern criticism. That was the wish of a child of the Church, this was the defiance of a rebel! And I was going to be the wife of this rebel. And this was a specimen of the life-work in which I was to help him! And this was what George Sutcliffe—our great friend, the man in whom Marcelle and I put utter trust—admired and published! I put the article down in sheer misery. I had read three-fourths; I could not finish it.

“Will you give mamma her tea? I will go out—I rather want a walk.” Mary stood in the open doorway.

“All right. I will come.”

I pulled myself together and went downstairs, Mary with me. She stopped in the hall.

“Lizzie, what is the matter? How very pale you are!

Are you faint? I wish you wouldn't look like that. Do go out and let me stay with mother."

Before she could speak again I opened the door and went in to my mother. It was an unspeakable comfort to be busied with her all the evening. She was better and brighter: she spoke of her youth: she spoke of my father: reserves were melting as she approached the great silence. She smiled over little old jokes. There was a radiance about her. She had almost done with life's sorrow. I yearned to have the light that seemed reflected from heaven turned for a moment on the abyss of darkness in my own soul.

"I am so happy about you since my talk with Paul," she said once that evening. "He is exactly the man who would have charmed your father."

"Oh mother, mother," my heart cried within me, "is there no help? What must I live through, how much heartache must I carry about with me in silence!" Happy about me! It seemed a terrible sarcasm at that moment but I was thankful for it while it burnt into me.

I was up a good deal in the night that followed. I slept with my mother now, not that I slept that night at all. She could not bear to disturb me, she little knew what a relief it was each time she called me out of the world of my own pain. I was not really awake, only half so, but the half of my faculties ran riot in shapeless, miserable fancies, and miserable clinging prayers. At seven in the morning Mary came in with tea. Poor Miss Mills was very retiring now. We girls had taught her to be so, but she took it very quietly and patiently. I crept quietly out as my mother was dozing and went to Mass.

When I came back to breakfast I found a letter from George Sutcliffe: "I am just back from Switzerland and am aghast at the article in the *Catholic International*. I cannot conceive what to do. I was a fool to leave even one number in his hands, but I was badly in need of a holiday,

and I had seen all the other articles. If I came down this afternoon, would you be able to see me? Please telegraph."

It was an enormous, a huge relief. I sent the gardener with a telegram, and that afternoon I went down to the station to meet Mr. Sutcliffe.

It was a very quiet country station, with one narrow road between high banks leading to the village. I had come from home by a footpath through the fields, and I waited sitting on the stile that divided it from the main road. I heard the train come in and it seemed only a moment later that Mr. Sutcliffe passed me in the road below. He had come very quickly, and was striding along with his hands in his pockets when he heard me call him. He came up, jumped over the stile, and shook hands. He looked intensely serious and preoccupied. We walked across the field, I on the path, he, with his hands again in his pockets, by my side. At last he said abruptly, looking quickly at me:—

"It's a 'doosid awkward affair,' isn't it?"

The quotation was too much for my overstrained nerves, and I laughed a little hysterically.

"Yes, I know," said my companion; "but the question is, what's to be done now?"

"I want to know first," I said, "what it means. Is it a true account of the Congress?"

"Verbally, or I should say logically, almost true," he said, "though it goes pretty near the wind in that. In d'Etranges' mind quite true, I have very little doubt. As a matter of fact, the effect produced by the article is a complete misrepresentation of what he said. But why are we walking at such a pace, and you look horribly tired?"

"I was only trying to keep up with you."

"Oh, I beg your pardon! I am awfully sorry," and he began to saunter slowly at my side. Then he went on:—

"You see at the Congress he was giving facts for the theologians to consider and meet in their statements. He

said nothing inconsistent with the views of those who regard theology as a science, with permanent principles, to be applied to the facts which every age brings to light. Thus it becomes more accurate in its detailed conclusions as it receives fresh facts of which to take account. The authorities and the theologians were to have before them the new data as well as the old. In the article, on the other hand, he lets us see the intellectual scorn towards older methods which he so carefully veiled in the presence of many to whom it would have given deep offence. He treats theological principles as of no account or as simply wrong. Theologians are fools. Only a brand new revolutionary theology can meet the situation. At the Congress it was open to us to regard the development of theology as the continuation of what has been from the beginning. There have been times of stagnation, times of reform. But theology has in the long run taken account of ascertained facts, and the authorities have endorsed its conclusions, have on occasion decided between rival views. It has been an organic growth, facts accumulating until they cannot be resisted, and the rulers, in some degree at all events, watching and superintending the process. From the article one would infer that traditional principles have no value or truth. And look at the conclusion of the article—which you have not read. Reform is to come not by stimulating an organic growth in which old principles guarded by authority, and new knowledge each have their share, but by a violent interposition from Rome, whose knowledge and insight would have to be almost miraculous to meet the situation. It is the old mistake of Lamennais. I think this change in Paul's expression has arisen partly from the following reason. The Cardinal regarded an exaltation of the office of Rome as proof positive of orthodoxy, and he is not a philosopher or theologian. Consequently, it was just the indications of this part of Paul's theory in the Congress speech which he

praised. Paul, elated with hope, has abandoned his former caution and reticence, and puts forward his paradox in all nakedness. At the Congress we could still preserve the accustomed notion of mutually corrective representatives of the different classes of truths, spiritual, theological, scientific, gradually eliminating what is old fashioned, and doing so under the guidance of providence, official authority warding off all revolutionary change, and voicing on the rare occasion of infallible definition what is the truest expression of the traditional revelation *vis à vis* to contemporary controversy. In the article, on the contrary, we have in startling opposition a rotten theology, and a quasi-magical authority in Rome which is to revolutionise it. He holds the knife at the throat of the old-fashioned school, and brandishes Cardinal Mattei (who will bless him for it) in their eyes. He is determined to have war. He wants a big row. Ever since I have known him he has been spoiling for a row. He cannot see that peace and quietness are needed for the growth of the scientific spirit he wants. This sort of thing is bound to exasperate authority and throw us back, not help us forward."

Mr. Sutcliffe was striding on again, and I was mentally and physically too tired to keep up. We had got into a large wood that lay between the station and my home. I sat down on a fallen tree and covered my face with my hands.

"What a brute I am!" he cried. "I'm awfully sorry, I am afraid I have been trying you dreadfully."

"On the contrary," I managed to say, "it was far, far worse before you came."

"When did you read it?" he asked. He was leaning against a tree just behind me.

"Yesterday."

"Only yesterday! Why, it has been out for ten days at least."

"Where and when did you read it?" I asked.

"On the Lake of Lucerne about five days ago; so I came home that night. I had been walking on the mountains and had missed my post. I opened it without a qualm, and the rest of the number is the best we've had. Have you heard from Paul?"

"Yes, he is at Milan, but he does not allude to the *International*."

"I've not heard from him. I've heard from Marcelle, of course, but I've said nothing to her yet. I wanted to see you first, and to hear if she had written to you about the article."

"Not a word."

"Of course I found heaps of letters, either abusive, anxious, or completely puzzled. My father's was absolutely miserable and gave me far the most pain. He has always been anxious about my views, and he certainly would have cause if I had written this article. But what I want to show you is one from Father Duly."

He took packets of letters out of every pocket, and turned them over in vain. At last Father Duly's was discovered.

"DEAR MR. SUTCLIFFE,

"I am entirely bewildered by the article in the *International*. First, it is a shock that the Count should have written it; secondly, it is a worse shock that it should appear in a periodical with your name as editor on the cover. I read it late at night, and at breakfast I saw that I was not the only one who had read it under the Bishop's roof. Canon Markham came in holding the *Catholic International* in his hand. He was in a dark glow of holy avenging joy. The foe was unmasked, the heretic displayed in all his true colours. He ate a large breakfast as if it were a solemn duty to sustain the champion of the Lord. I could have laid sacrilegious hands on him! I never felt such bad passions in my life; they almost choked me while I watched him. I've never felt like that before because I've never

been so frantically unhappy as that article had made me. It was joy to him. He was pouring out his second cup of coffee when the Bishop came in. His Lordship began his usual cheery, pleasant chat about nothing in particular. Canon Markham was conspicuously silent. After a little while he said in a sepulchral voice, 'I shall put on your Lordship's table this number of the *Catholic*' (his tone was one of withering sarcasm) '*International Review*, with an article by the Comte d'Etranges'. The Bishop looked intensely bored at this announcement. 'Thank you, but I shall not have time to read it to-day.' Canon Markham was silent for some moments, then he said, 'I have written my opinion of it for the —— *Magazine*. Have I your Lordship's permission to send my judgment of it from this house to-day?'

"'Is it necessary to act so very rapidly?'

"'Absolutely necessary.'

"'Very well, I will read both to-day.' He gave a sigh and disappeared. I saw him again at dinner with a look of such misery and anger on his face as I've never seen there before. The Canon was radiant and inclined to cheerful conversation. The Bishop hardly uttered a word. After dinner I asked if I might see him alone. 'Come to me in an hour,' he said, and I saw him then go to the chapel. I went up to his little study as it struck six, and the room was nearly dark. It is very plainly furnished but very tidy, more the room of a man of business than of a student. It has a window looking into the church, and as the shutters were open I peered down into the dark sanctuary below, and saw him kneeling with his face buried in his hands; the red light of the sanctuary lamp was reflected on his nearly bald head with its fringe of grey hair. He had quite forgotten the time. I stood waiting but he did not move. I pushed the shutter, and it shut suddenly with a bang. He looked up, rose, bent his knee for a moment, and with his long strides

soon reached the room. He came in, put his hand for a moment on my arm and said, 'I know what you want'.

"My Lord, must there be any action taken, any answer published, before they have had time to explain?"

"How can anything explain *that*?" he said bitterly, pointing at the *Review*; and sitting down at his table he leant back with a darkened countenance.

"Must you let an article go from this house before even hearing from George Sutcliffe?" I said.

"Mr. Sutcliffe has proved absolutely unreliable. He assured me that he could answer for his friend's orthodoxy and his good intentions. And now the Count writes this appalling defiance of the Church and Mr. Sutcliffe publishes it!"

"It is impossible! inconceivable!" I cried. "It is madness. I am convinced that Mr. Sutcliffe has done this against his own wish, or he was away or something."

"The Bishop smiled bitterly. 'I could not have believed it; no report or opinion of anybody else could have convinced me. But I have the testimony of my own eyes and my own sense. It wants no specialist knowledge to understand such a defiance. What the Canon does not understand is that they will enjoy any condemnation, any appeal against them to Rome. They want a row, they want notoriety. Well,' he moved wearily in his chair, 'they shall get it!'"

"My Lord, may I venture to ask what you think must be done?"

"Well, first of all, Markham must have a free hand, he is perfectly justified. He has been right all along, and I have been wrong."

"Oh, my Lord," I cried, 'can't he be quiet for a little bit? Can't there be some charity, some mercy?"

"Do you suppose the man who wrote the article cares *that*," he snapped his fingers, 'for our charity? No, Markham must write and do as he thinks best."

"And you, my Lord?"

“‘You’ve no right to ask,’ he said, ‘absolutely none. But I don’t mind telling you. I shall give Mr. George Sutcliffe and the Count the choice of either suspending the *Catholic International Review*, or of announcing, with an apology, that they will accept my censor for the future: and if they refuse both proposals, I shall denounce them in a letter to the clergy to be read in every Church in the diocese warning the faithful against the *Review*. I may do other things. I shall feel myself absolutely free to act as I think best. They deserve no consideration at my hands. They have deceived me grossly. I was ready to take the most large-minded view of their scientific theories and objects. I am not a specialist. I am most anxious to leave these controversies to those who are. Again and again, as you know, the Canon has urged me to interfere, to protest against articles in the *International*. I refused, I did not think they were passing the limit of freedom allowed by the Church. I believed in the loyalty of their intentions. I am undeceived. The man who could write, and the man who could publish such a defiance were *not* loyal when they assured me they were. The change would be too sudden. This is what they meant all along. They have not been straightforward with me, they have not played an open game.’

“It was useless for me to say more, it is useless for me to write more. I said, ‘My Lord, may I write freely to Mr. Sutcliffe as to what you have said to me?’

“‘Do what you please,’ he said coolly, and he began to read his office as I came away to send you this.

“If you can send me any ray of comfort do so.

“Yours ever,

“PETER DULY.”

When I had finished the letter and looked up, George Sutcliffe was reading and turning over several other letters, long and short.

"I won't give them to you," he said, "they would only worry you."

"Have you told the Bishop that you were away when this article came out without your knowledge or permission?"

"No, I haven't, and at present I don't mean to."

"But you ought!" I cried. "It was you who assured him of the lines on which the *Review* was to be conducted—you were the editor, the responsible person. He believes that it was you who deceived him."

"But I'm not going to say, 'Please sir, it wasn't me, it was t'other boy'. I see now how mad it was to leave even one number in d'Etranges' hands."

He sat down suddenly on the ground as he spoke and crossed his legs like a tailor. He was in good training or his big muscular limbs could not have been so agile. He smiled as he spoke, but I felt it was an effort.

"But what is the use of making out that two of you are wrong instead of one? Besides, the pain you cause to your people, to everybody. And it's not just, it can't be right!"

I felt very near tears. The long days and nights in my mother's sickroom had weakened me, and I was hardly fit for the shock of Paul's conduct, the sense of sick anxiety about him and about myself. I began to wonder if I myself were a loyal Catholic, if all my new dreams and hopes were vain. The thought of our engagement, of our marriage sunk unconsciously into significance. It was our lives as children of the Church that were at stake.

He was silent for a moment. Then he said:—

"But I intend to prove that we are both right, not wrong. I am not going to dissociate myself from Paul," and he hesitated, "from Marcelle, because of one idiotic article. Paul is in a nasty ugly temper, but he is not a heretic, not a bit of it!"

"Are you sure, *quite* sure?" I pleaded. All my intel-

lectual positions had dissolved and left me. I wanted the sound of comforting words like a child.

"Yes," said George, with the big physical force he carried into his convictions. "There is a sound line of argument beneath his intolerable exaggerations and paradoxes—though of course the paradoxes can't be defended."

"But would Paul apologise?"

"That's what I want to ask you."

I shook my head.

"Then we must withdraw."

"He won't consent."

George was silent. "It is not easy to see one's way," he said. "The Bishop is right in thinking that d'Etranges wants a row. He wants, in his Celtic way, to bully the theologians, to frighten them into a little more respect for modern thought."

"I wish you could see the Bishop and talk it over freely," I said.

"That would of course be ideal, but it would not work in a real world. He would not believe me for a moment unless I dissociated myself entirely from d'Etranges. He would expect me to say *mea culpa* for past articles in the *Review*, in which I absolutely agree and about which I won't give in an inch. He is perfectly right to be angry, very angry, about this article, but what man, human man, however saintly, can keep his anger exactly inside a complicated outline? He would have to be more than human to do so."

"But you will tell Father Duly?"

"No I shan't, at least not now."

"But I hate to think of your being under this cloud in England where everybody knows you. They know nothing of Paul, he is a name to them; besides, he has done it himself."

"I'm not sure I don't rather enjoy it, I'm a bit tired of being the good boy."

But I knew better, I could see how he was suffering. Then I was startled at the church clock striking six. I jumped up.

"I can't ask you to come home," I said, "my mother is too ill."

He seemed to forget everything else while I told him of our anxiety.

"I almost wish I had not come," he said. "I ought not to have told you so much that is trying."

"It was far worse while it was one big hopeless cloud. You have done me a lot of good. I do hope, pray and trust that Paul——"

We had come to a gate between the fields and our own grounds; he opened it for me and leant on it for a moment as I passed through.

"Now I've talked it out with you I feel clearer. I shall write freely to Marcelle. We must not get down in the mouth, Miss Fairfax, we have a common creed, '*Credo in Paulum*'. We will stick to it, and let all the canons in the world thunder their anathemas, it keeps them amused and occupied! Good-bye."

There was a cheery ring in his voice, but before he turned away our eyes met. There was something that troubled me in his look; some element of suffering and of self-repression on his part; some strange questioning of me.

As I walked very slowly through our plantation, I felt as if he were still speaking. "'*Credo in Paulum*,' that is all the help I can give you: we must not look too close, I must not even guess how much you are in need of help." I pulled myself together—my mind was wandering after a sleepless night—there could be no room for childish fancies in my life now.

VI.

TEN days later, in a small sitting-room in a big London hotel in Victoria Street, there were gathered together, Paul, Marcelle, Mr. Sutcliffe and myself. We had had luncheon at the table d'hôte, and now we were drinking our coffee in the sitting-room. Downstairs, Marcelle had been a little noisy, happily in the French language, now she was very quiet.

We were sitting side by side, and she was holding my hand.

"Isn't it extraordinary? Isn't it charming that we are all just like ourselves, even in a horrid London hotel, in the middle of all the vulgar pomps the Devil selects for the English? George is just as nice and big and true, although he looks quite the man about town."

"The Devil lets Englishmen choose good clothes then?" I said.

"The Devil is nothing if not inconsistent." She was not paying the least attention to me. She was watching Paul reading a letter, and George standing behind him smoking and waiting. I moved and took a low seat near Paul. He looked at me with a pleased smile for a moment and went on reading the letter. I knew it was from the Bishop to George Sutcliffe.

It was the first meeting between Mr. Sutcliffe and the Count since the publication of the obnoxious article. Paul had only got back from France the night before. Marcelle

had come up from Peak Hall to meet him. My mother being a little better, I had come up for a few hours to meet them.

Before luncheon I had found Marcelle and George alone in a window. I had thought that she had been crying and then comforted.

"We know nothing whatever of Paul's intentions," Marcelle had said in a whisper as we met. "Poor Lisa, we have all had some bad days." She had slipped her hand into mine as she spoke. Then the door opposite was opened and we could say no more.

Paul had been even paler than usual, but with a curious light in his eyes. He had first kissed my hand with the usual gentle, almost solemn acknowledgment of our relation to each other. Then with a shade of embarrassment in his manner, he had turned to George and greeted him heartily. I had thought George's manner a little negative. At luncheon all had seemed natural, now the critical moment was coming.

Every now and then a sarcastic smile played on Paul's lips as he read. He handed the letter back to George.

"You have been too loyal to me," he said, with an unconscious touch of grandeur in his manner.

"That is not the point," said George curtly, and coming forward he leant one elbow on the marble mantelpiece to the imminent danger of a hideous chimney ornament of china and glass.

"The point is," said Paul, "will I, will you, accept the Bishop's conditions? Are we ready to accept his censor for the future, with an apology for the past? I do not hesitate to say 'no'. *Non, certainement non.*"

We were absolutely silent, the dropping of a pin would have relieved the tension of our nerves.

"Then," said Mr. Sutcliffe at last, "we simply withdraw the *Review*."

I think Paul almost enjoyed the intensity of our anxiety, for he waited in silence for some moments.

"*Mais, oui, certainement.*"

Our relief and astonishment were unbounded.

"In the most filial manner we suspend publication," he said ironically.

Marcelle's colour had come back. I think I too was flushed with relief. George grinned; it was broader than a smile, it was a grin which he directed to Marcelle and myself.

"*Attendez un moment.* Wait a bit," said Paul. "Do not be mistaken. I am not peaceful and meek. I am not going to be trampled on and vilified. I am merely going to change the scene of combat. Perish the *Catholic International Review*; it has done its work. It has proved that there is no freedom of speech for Catholics in England—and freedom of speech I will have, but I shall seek it not here, but in Rome. My friends, I make my appeal to the Mother of Churches. In that Mother's heart there is no petty local tyranny, no sectarian bitterness, no wish to crush the intellect and falsify facts."

His voice was solemn, sweet and piercing. There was some quality in it that counteracted the too eloquent and somewhat histrionic manner of speaking. He was a Frenchman, but it was his gift that while actively, obviously French, he did not as a matter of fact jar upon our English sensitiveness and reserve.

"Now," he smiled genially, "we appeal from Canon Markham to Cardinal Mattei, from the Bishop of Leeds to the Father of all Christians. It is not a bad exchange."

Marcelle leapt up, a glow of joy in her face, and clapped her hands. She was full of joy, beaming over with delight. I too was immensely thankful. She crossed the room and sat on the arm of Paul's chair.

For a moment I felt the intense likeness, and the intensity of the bond, between those two. Of the same race, of the

closest kinship, practically orphans, disciple and pupil. How she must have suffered during those last days alone at Peak Hall! What was her relief now! They did not speak, they only looked at each other. They had both forgotten us two English people.

I seemed to hear very remote voices from their ancestors asking each somewhere over their heads:—

“Ces enfants, sont-ils tous les deux bons Catholiques?”

“Mais, oui, certainement. Ils tiennent à notre race et à notre foi.”

If the spirits were indeed there, I think they blessed them.

The silence was broken by a waiter asking if the Count would see Mr. Arcot. It was the journalist to whom Mr. Sutcliffe so much objected.

The Count hastened out of the room. I think he must have seen that his visitor was near the door, and wished to prevent his coming in. I could hear them greeting.

As the door closed behind him Marcelle leapt up and held out a hand to each of us as we stood on each side of her.

“Oh, I am thankful, I am thankful!” she cried. “It is a relief, ah, what a relief! I was dreadfully silly to be frightened about Paul, was I not, Lisa, was I not, George?”

Something caught in my throat, and I knew a happy struggle with tears of joy. Those tears are the joy of exiles only, and they tell us tenderly that our nature is not yet capable of the joy that wipes away all tears. So even Marcelle for a moment became silent in her rejoicing.

Silently, we two stood and watched her with the still glow of happiness lighting up her beauty. Only the very intimate can afford such silences, and her entire absence of self-consciousness made it possible for us to gain a glimpse of her inner self, with a reverent affection. Such are the moments that make friendship strong to endure through misunderstanding, and pain, and isolation.

I think, looking back now on that afternoon, that I understand better one thing that has often puzzled me—namely, our extreme facility in forgiving Paul for that article. It had been disloyal to the Church, insolent to the Bishop and ungentlemanly towards George, and we had suffered from it as no one else could suffer. I don't say we were right to get over it as we did, but I think I see how the matter worked in our minds. Consciously, or more often unconsciously, we were always feeling anxious and responsible for Paul. We felt that we must lead him because he was our leader. We were more anxious to bring him into the way of truth and loyalty than anxious to judge him impartially. We were so intensely relieved at the line he took on that fateful day, so immensely glad at his wish to appeal to Rome, that we lost sight of the wrong already done. Then too the appeal in itself seemed to interpret the article in the very best sense. Lastly, the violence of Canon Markham prevented our seeing the justice of the Bishop's displeasure. It roused the spirit of party devotion. Yet in spite of all this, the thing forgiven and explained away had existed, and it had much more effect upon myself than upon either of the others.

But to go back to that afternoon.

VII.

GEORGE soon had to leave us, and then Marcelle and I stood by the window looking out, at first without consciously seeing it, at the Abbey before us. Then at the same moment we felt drawn to the great harmonious beauty of the silent teacher, and Marcelle said—

“Oh, let us go there now, Lisa!”

We had been there together before, and we both loved it, but with a difference. Marcelle could not love it as I did! Entwined in the heart-strings of every Englishman or Englishwoman, is it in reality less dear to those of us who may not join in public worship there? Are not more than half its memories peculiarly ours? Do we not yearn in the midst of its glories for what it might have been in its fullness?

To Marcelle it was more homelike than any other building she had seen in England. It was of one family with Rheims, Amiens and Chartres.

But it was very different to be at home in the Abbey as I was, to remember the days when as a half-frightened child I used to peer among the tombs and puzzle out strange eighteenth-century epitaphs—proud-sounding adjectives with their odd ring, as if lecturing the Almighty on the excellence of His creatures.

Marcelle had not like me shivered as a child at the gruesome stony death, emerging from the tomb with his spear to thrust it into the beautiful young woman above! She had

not felt the thrill of fear, inspired in an English Catholic child by the waxwork bust of the persecuting Queen Elizabeth. Nor did she know how a girl of fifteen, with a dawning knowledge of literature, and sensible of having mastered all the intricacies of eighteenth-century politics in Macaulay's essays, can gaze with breathless admiration at the monument to Chatham, and almost hear Pitt in dying accents bid her roll up the map of Europe; and then leaving the south transept go to see Fox tended by slaves in the most hideous of all the hideous sculptures, with an awe-struck sense of his magnificent wickedness?

Marcelle would have cleared away all the marble enormities, the odd death's heads, the pagan grandiloquent inscriptions, and all the upright half-dressed great men who had they died before the Reformation would have been kneeling or lying in peace. I could not argue it with her, I had not the patience, but I would not have had a stone touched or an absurdity erased even to bring out the glory of the great Gothic lines of the building. Its very defacements, its worst blemishes told the story of the country loved by Englishmen so passionately, and by none more passionately than by the children of the proscribed and persecuted Papist. We do not only love Burke, who risked and lost the greatest places in the State by pleading for us, we love George III. who most honestly refused to emancipate us. We understand the rulers who could not understand us. We went to fight and to die for a country that banned us and we only loved her the more! It is often thus with the least-loved child of a large family. Even to-day I felt all this too strongly for words, although another aspect of the great Abbey was the most obvious in connection with what had just passed. We were in a glow of joy in which all other things were reflected. For we were safe and we were happy Paul was not revolting, Paul was not a stumbling-block Paul had of his own free will done the loyal, the simple,

the true thing. Paul was going to Rome! And we had sought the Abbey to enjoy this new thought there. Is there not a peculiar joy in finding out that you have wronged a friend? You have been to blame, not he, and you are very, very glad. You are angry with yourself for your meanness. How or why could I have doubted Paul? Had I not misinterpreted his article, had I not wronged him in that, and in his attitude towards his Bishop? It was all clear now, it was all in order, the doing of a true son of the Church. "An appeal to Rome!" It seemed to ring out high above our heads in the Abbey that had been under the immediate jurisdiction of the Pontiff, for no Bishop then, or indeed now, had, or has the right to jurisdiction over the Abbot or Dean of Westminster.

Would not the men who built that great pile have done just the same as we? Did they not do the same? Had they not been, were they not now of a solidarity with us? Pass by in silence all that had come between them and us and we found again our fellows in the greatest religious organism known to humanity. Was there no romance in that?

And so leaving the transept of the silent singers, we passed into the Confessor's Chapel, and we knelt there unobserved to pray that an English King and Saint might bless our doing what he indeed would have done.

"The tomb used to be covered in gold," said a verger, in a loud, strident voice, as he came into the chapel with a group of tourists, "but that was because the Pope canonised his body and made him a saint."

Poor Confessor, a curious process indeed! But after a few minutes we were told that we must leave the chapel, as service was about to begin. We stayed as we walked down the nave, arrested by the exquisite beauty of the sounds. To me from a child the Anglican service had had a peculiar attraction. The exquisite gravity and culture and reverence,

the wonderful beauty of the English, and the strange pathos, the unconscious hunger that seemed to haunt its beauty. Did it not mourn exquisitely but as a widow in Sion? Was it not the expression of souls belonging, we might indeed hope, to the invisible Church, but yearning after the full measure of Christ? Then a single, beautiful, refined voice began to read the lesson—with the traditional culture of our whole university history, with a perfection almost unknown in our own churches.

And as we came away he was saying:—

“But we will not boast of things without *our* measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you.

“For we stretch not ourselves beyond *our measure*, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in *preaching* the gospel of Christ.

“Not boasting of things without *our* measure, that is of other men’s labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our *rule* abundantly.”

And as we came out into the autumn sunshine, our minds full of the richness of our own lot, we dreamed of a possible moment of that enlarging “according to rule” which the increase of a faith so beautiful, if incomplete, might bring to rejoice the heart of our common mother.

VIII.

DURING three weeks I was incessantly nursing my mother and had no leisure or attention for any other thoughts. The day after the one on which I went up to London certain alarming symptoms, which we had been led to expect, began to develop. Those weeks in the sickroom have a history to me, even now a vivid history. But whatever deepening of the heart, whatever knowledge of nature, whatever glimpses of the supernatural were interwoven with my life in those days in the sickroom, I need not speak of them here. There was a short time when my mother suffered horribly, but at almost the moment when it seemed to onlookers that no more could be endured, the pain ceased; death had drawn near, and the irritation of the living nerves was numbed as mortification set in. But her mind was clear; she was herself to the last, in fact more than herself as we had known her all our lives. Reserve had broken away, and we could see beneath it. Every moment was intensely precious to us, and at the end it was the cutting short of her dying moments that seemed a greater loss than any other. She died at dawn on a Monday morning, and an hour afterwards old Miss Mills put Mary and myself to bed as if we had been children. I hardly knew if she had left me before the sleep of utter exhaustion had come. When I woke it was late. I believe Miss Mills had guarded the room like a dragon. I got up at once and drew to the window before I knew what I was feeling. Then the truth came over me, and a

horrible hunger for my mother, not so much for the dying soul who had just been taken from us, but for the mother of my childhood, for the knee I used to sit on, for the white hand that hushed me off to sleep. I was alone, terribly alone. I choked the dry hard sobs for fear Mary should hear them. And hardly knowing what I meant I heard myself cry :—

“No, no, I cannot, I cannot marry Paul d’Etranges.”

It seemed as if my whole being were convulsed by some overpowering movement of nature. The sight of death, the knowledge of death for the first time had left me in some mysterious way in the hands of the elemental powers. I shook and shivered in my misery. A rebellion against the chains I had put on myself rose up in confusion. I flung myself, face downwards, on my bed.

“I can’t do it,” I cried. “How can I do it? Oh, God help me not to know why!” I hugged my pillow, I buried my face in it. “Oh, God, help me not to love George Sutcliffe.”

The thing had been spoken, and I lay for a few minutes perfectly still. Then I got up quite quietly and dressed quickly, and passed into my mother’s room.

The bed was in the middle of the room, tall candlesticks had already been brought from the church, and threw the only light on the figure lying there. I knelt down and bowed my head in my hands; the peace of the dead that die in the Lord was all about me. I opened my heart and took it in. By my mother’s body I could not fail to find peace and strength. My own immediate trials fell into the background. Life seemed made up chiefly of the simple facts of childhood and death. I prayed at first mechanically, as my rosary beads passed through my fingers, then it came to my mind that I was after all not so very far from my own death. I prayed, not for a happy life, but for a happy death. The stillness, the soft light, the flowers, the

crucifix at the foot of the bed, the one or two kneeling figures near, the utterly unfamiliar aspect of the familiar room all soothed me. And then a comfort beyond these things was given to me, a gleam from heaven above into the earth beneath.

At last dear Miss Mills, with her little brown face furrowed and wet with tears, touched me on the shoulder and I came out. She gave me breakfast very quietly, and asked me to go into the open air for a while. I knew she was right, and I submitted.

It was an exquisite autumn morning, all blue and sparkling as if some quality from the highest sky had come nearer to the earth than usual. I dragged weak steps into the wood, and sat down on the nearest bench. It was what I had come long ago to call in my own mind "the bench of temptation"; it was there that years before I had been tempted to revolt against my mother and my narrow life. And now on the day of her death I had come there not knowing where I went. Surely on such a day I could think of nothing else? Yet it was not so. It added to my pain that my thoughts seemed almost blasphemous. Was it my fault if image after image of past things rose to convict me?

I saw myself a shy and miserable little home girl—a waif in a smart unfriendly party, one kind strong man talking to her. I could hear Marcelle on the first night I knew her: "*Tiens*, then why did you blush?" I saw him as he protested against my engagement in the train—I saw him leaning over the gate saying "*Credo in Paulum*" with a sad questioning in his eyes. I recognised a dim sense of sacrifice in the first days when I had tried to bring him and Marcelle together. I probably exaggerated, now that I had suddenly become conscious of it, how much the wish to give George his heart's desire had influenced me towards my engagement to Paul. I knew now, with heart throbs of quick

pain, why the idea of being cut off from those three, if I refused his mother's strange offer for Paul, had been intolerable and not to be faced. A mist had rolled away, and I saw myself during the past year in the light of one idea. It was a mercy that the natural upheaval of my nature at my mother's passing away had been the cause and the moment of my enlightenment. If it had come at any other time, who knows how I should have borne it? Perhaps the torrent would have proved insupportable. As it was, loyalty, love, sorrow, held me in the presence in which it was easy to meet my enemy, almost difficult to fall into temptation.

My thoughts became calm and a little dreamy as the moments passed. The leaves were dead and falling, and no bird was singing. But the blueness of heaven was above me still. The silence sang to me, the intense stillness of autumn, which is the peace of faith in another spring. But the autumn was so short, my life might be so long. The autumn had its faith realised so soon, mine was to live in darkness for so long. It was strange to think of what I had dreaded, sitting there those years ago. How different life had proved from all I had feared! I had feared emptiness, want of interest, a dull domestic routine. I had learnt to know aching anxiety, intense interest, a too full life. How different now was my outlook on that same landscape to-day when I had slipped into the valley of the shadow of death. But it was the old lesson I needed. Loyalty to my bonds, this time self-imposed, loyalty of heart to my friends. The sacrifice of my own feelings, had I even guessed then what that might mean? There was a temptation to be fled from, to be ignored, to be buried. If George and Marcelle had been married by now, I could have done it, I should have done it successfully. Then I could do it now. My mainstay was my horror of treason,

cruelty, ingratitude, even in thought. My text was the old treasure won in that old struggle in my teens, singing in the autumnal silence, in the blue ether, as the bird sang among the green leaves of spring, "*Loyale je serai durant ma vie*".

IX.

THE days that followed were full of business, full of prayer, but all the time as I moved about and gave orders and had low-toned discussions with Miss Mills and Mary, a kind of argument was going on within me. How far was I to blame for what had passed and was passing? Was it my own fault, if while I had been forcing myself to an imaginary vocation of devotion to Paul, to the idealisation of an un-called-for sacrifice, beneath that unsubstantial airy castle deep foundations had been laid, unknown to me, of true human love for another? If I were to blame, it was in some deep-rooted fault of character, it came of a moral history of long ago. It was a very hidden sin, if sin it were, and not merely misfortune. I could not blame myself; if I must be blamed, I would rather be blamed of God who loved me better than I did myself. I never went into my mother's room without a deep sense of peace possessing me instantly. And in that peace I buried all things of fancy and planned a new life. I had little doubt of my duty from the first. I saw no adequate reason why I should break my solemnly plighted word to Paul. And after the first miserable revolt I was glad it was so. Our engagement, our relations with each other had never even professed to depend upon the affections! We had been both above and below the mere details of ordinary sentiment! I was thankful to have my life settled for me, and to know that it would be in all outward meanings a full one. It would, humanly speaking, be

very lonely within. But in that how was it different from the lives of so many others? How many women, unmarried or married, carried about a tract of lonely life within them? But that loneliness could be lighted from heaven and warmed by friendship. I had not the least doubt that once this too overpowering feeling had been calmed, I should be able to be friends with George and Marcelle, unshadowed by this passing misery of unholy joy.

They all three came down to the funeral. I dreaded their coming unutterably, but I had no right to keep them away. My poor little Mary, like many unimaginative people, had been terribly frightened by the presence of death. At the end she had not had my consolations. She had been obviously second with my mother, who in proportion as she treated me as a woman regarded Mary more as a child. Then, too, as I knew afterwards, Mary was very unhappy about me. I was at the time horribly afraid that she had come very near to guessing the truth. But she had by that time no thought of George in my connection, only she was intensely set against my marrying Paul. Poor child, she felt that she had lost her sister; and her mother, instead of clinging to her, had clung to me. Her friendship with our neighbours the Darcombes was her comfort, and nothing unfortunately jarred on me more than the visits of those excellent people to my mother's room.

The morning of the funeral arrived. I knew my friends would reach us by nine o'clock, and my half-brother soon afterwards. At a few minutes past nine I was listening for the wheels. I cannot describe the state of my nerves even while kneeling in that room very near my mother's coffin. I felt suffocated, exhausted, incapable. If only Mr. Sutcliffe were not coming! It was too horrible that I should be troubled with thoughts of anything but my mother and prayer to-day.

I heard the wheels of the fly. I did not stir. Miss Mills

fluttered behind me, and seeing that I did not move she went away. Then in a moment Marcelle was kneeling on one side of me, and Paul on the other, and another figure beyond them. Suddenly I felt unutterably calm, and entirely full of the thought of my mother and my father. Their union, their peace wrapped me round. And in that peace all my friends, whether loved too much or too little, found their places without jar or disturbance. It seemed as if already we were in the great crowd before the Throne, and that already all tears had been wiped from our eyes, for the former things had passed away.

All that day was the same. When I kissed Marcelle and Paul, almost unconscious that it was the first time he had touched my cheek with his lips, when I shook hands in quiet friendship and sympathy with George, there was no effort, no strain, no doubt. There is one note left in my mind of my mother's funeral, the note of triumph; and one set of words, sung, it seemed to me, chiefly by Marcelle and George and Paul, as they walked behind us out of the little church:—

“*In Paradisum deducant te Angeli*”.

And peace did not entirely leave me at any time during the day. I introduced my half-brother to the Count with a faint sense of amusement at the incongruity of the two men. The Darcombes also came back to the house and surrounded Mary. She repulsed Marcelle's efforts to talk to her, not rudely but decidedly, and managed to avoid Paul. Dear little tired-out Miss Mills occupied him after his talk with my brother, and was obviously charmed. George Sutcliffe had gone to the priest's house. Marcelle and I slipped out together and went to the wood. She was awestruck, sweet and gentle. It is a hard, very unthankful thing, the giving of sympathy, but the absolute candour, the craving after reality that made her unsympathetic in small things, made her to me a great comfort in sorrow. She took and realised,

not what might be said or thought appropriately, but the actual facts before her.

"It makes a new loneliness, the loneliness of nature, just following on the closest intimacy, the intimacy with the dying."

This quiet analysis suited me, and we entered into the same thoughts about the service too.

"It is hard to get back to life; but Lisa, we must," she said at last, "if you can bear it."

"I should like to know what is going on. I have heard nothing, read nothing since I saw you."

"You have not read Canon Markham's article even?"

A deep colour flushed on her face as she spoke.

"I don't think I could bear it yet," I said, seeing how terribly agitated she was.

"I understand now why heaven is to be the reward for forgiving our enemies," Marcelle said. "Nothing but an eternity depending upon it could make it possible."

I recognised with fear in her tone and in her bearing a racial capacity for hatred and revenge, little known by, or congenial to, my own countrywomen.

"Lisa, that man has done everything that the devil could have done to drive Paul out of the Church. It is wicked, horribly wicked, and with such a horrid enjoyment! There is one passage in the article almost amounting to, 'Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire'. Isn't it blasphemy in a human creature, a mere man? Lisa, don't you believe there will be a special judgment on these men?"

X.

IN a moment of panic lest Marcelle's penetrative power had reached just too far I agreed, against my judgment and all my wiser wishes, to go with them to Rome. That morning, sitting alone with a forgotten book open on my knee I had thought out the question. It seemed obvious that I had better not go. I was very tired, I needed rest. I needed to avoid the one person I was determined not to think about. It would surely be wiser and better to spend the winter quietly at home with Miss Mills. I could look over my mother's papers, take care of her poor, say my prayers, read and study—or pretend to. Routine would rest me, and restore the sense of unity in my life, in my own being. Sorrow has a fearfully disintegrating power; it sets the mind against the heart, the heart against the soul; it tramples on the body or makes it a tyrant. The mind, frightened at the state of the heart, demands change, amusement and distraction, and the heart is shocked and aching at the mind's disloyalty. Both trouble the soul, resisting its attraction to the supernatural, its craving for unity in union with what is above it. The body in some people is the wan, indifferent slave that only wants to be neglected and abased. In others it is tyrannous—hungry, thirsty, sleepy, as it was never hungry, thirsty and sleepy before. Only He who knows the "abysmal depths of personality" can judge of these things as between man and man. I know that while my grief was bowing me down in a frightful aching suffering, I longed for

change, for variety, for something quite and altogether new. The prospect of a winter in my mother's rooms amidst her things and with only Miss Mills was awful to me, and produced a kind of nervous terror. To go to Rome, to pray in great basilicas, to touch the past centuries, far, far off from my present life, to be soothed by all that was beautiful, taken out of myself by all that was greatest! To be amidst colours, sounds, forms I had never seen before! I longed hungrily for all this, and yet—was I deceiving myself? Was I already falling from all the resolutions I had made kneeling by my mother's coffin? Did I wish to go because I should often see one strong man kneeling in prayer and hear one cheering laugh, or see one smile of sympathy, hear certain direct bits of wisdom, be infected with the loyalty of one Englishman who loved the Church? Even to examine the thought made him perilously prominent in my mind. It was best to decide at once to stay at home. At home in silence and quiet I would prepare myself for life with Paul. According to all or nearly all the novels I knew, the thought of life with Paul ought to have filled me with disgust and repugnance. But it did not. For the time at least the feeling of rebellion which my mother's death had brought seemed to have passed away. In fact there were moments when I seemed to look upon my marriage as a haven of peace when all would be irrevocably decided in a life strengthened by grace.

In the afternoon Marcelle came down and captured, first Miss Mills, then me. She pressed me up and down, and scouted the idea of a horribly long lonely winter. "You should not have anything to disturb your mourning. You could take an apartment with Miss Mills alone, in Rome if you liked, and go nowhere but to church, see as little of us as you liked, be as little with Paul as you chose."

The words were a shock like cold water on my spine. I flushed deeply. What could she, what did she mean? Was

it a joke? I lost my head, coloured and stammered. She stood quite, quite still, and then in a curious far-off voice at once angry and very sad and almost tender—

“I have hit on a truth by mistake. It is that you do not wish to be with Paul. It is——”

“No, no, Marcelle!” I cried. “Don’t, don’t torment me! Indeed, it is not that. It is nothing of the kind. It is not Paul, it is——” I broke down crying.

“What is it, *chérie*?” she said.

“It is—it is that I had better, that I ought to stay at home.”

And then weakened (and at my best I was never strong) I fell a captive in her hands. Perhaps it was because there was a traitor in my heart in league with them. Anyhow the form my yielding took in my own thoughts was: “What is the use of avoiding him now, as our lives must be thrown together? Why is it more dangerous now than it will ever be? I cannot refuse to go without raising ideas and questions that ought never to be raised, that must never be raised between Marcelle and Paul and myself. As to Paul I could picture to myself so easily what I was resolved to do before I married him. I should some day tell him very quietly, probably standing by his chair, how I had once been surprised into a love not for him, and how I had quenched, crushed and extinguished that love. And he would probably say in his low thrilling voice: ‘My child, my dear love, all have passed by that way. Think of it no more. I am not worthy of whatever you have left to give me.’”

Meanwhile, to return to the practical. At no time quite capable of mastering the controversy between Paul and the Bishop, or rather Canon Markham, I was less so than ever just then. I saw very little of my friends during the weeks that followed my mother’s death. I could not spare time to go up to London. I had all my mother’s things to look through, and, what was for me, a great deal of business to

transact. This did not include the legal affairs connected with Mary's and my own very small fortunes, or my marriage settlements. These were to be left to the leisurely contemplation of the lawyers until we should get back from abroad.

Mary was to leave for Cannes with the Darcombes a week before Miss Mills and I were to join the d'Etranges, and start from London with them and Mr. Sutcliffe. Until then Paul and Marcelle stayed in the hotel opposite the Abbey in Victoria Street, and George went to pay a visit to his home, and have a few quiet weeks with his parents.

Marcelle wrote to me that Paul wished to stay in London, as he found it very convenient for seeing his friends. Besides a few admirers who lived in London there were several Frenchmen, and one or two Germans, who had come over to discuss with him his position in the present controversy. "More disciples," I concluded as I read. Then she told me that Paul was also occupied for many hours day and night in a long and difficult correspondence. Folios to Canon Markham and the Bishop, and reams to friends abroad were among his daily budget for the post, and the letters he received were unusually numerous.

I learned eventually, bit by bit, what it all meant. He pressed the Bishop for specific heads of offence, being dissatisfied with the vague charge of a disloyal tone. The Bishop referred him to Canon Markham, and after a good many charges had broken down, and the controversy seemed to have passed almost outside the original article, two points became clear on which they joined issue. Paul had claimed liberty for the biblical critics to distinguish the various documents in the Pentateuch, and to treat the history contained in various parts of the Bible as we should treat other history written at the same time, recognising in it the distinguishing peculiarities of the Oriental mind in dealing with historical narrative. Canon Markham had urged that this was

tantamount to saying that it was open to a Catholic to maintain that the inspiration of the Bible did not extend to matters of historical fact. Paul accepted at once this statement of the case. And so again when the Canon urged that Paul's view of evolution was Darwin's, and must logically include Darwin's doctrine as to the descent of man, Paul acquiesced without hesitation. He said no word on such modifications of Darwinism as those introduced by Wallace, which left room for Divine guidance of the process, and left the theory not essentially different—so far as theology went—from that of St. Thomas Aquinas himself. When George Sutcliffe, who read the correspondence, told me of it later, he pointed out that both propositions were not Paul's own, but the formulation by an enemy of so-called logical results of his writings. Still Paul accepted them without a word, and informed the Bishop that he should place these two points before the Holy Office in the form of *dubia*, that is to say, of questions as to whether a Catholic could safely hold them. The passages in Paul's article dealing with facts of the Old Testament narrative, and with evolution, were in themselves irresistible. But Paul, who was no theologian, and had indeed a contempt for all theology, did not realise that the Canon had so framed the propositions which were to be submitted to Rome as to make them run directly counter to the recognised teaching in the schools. The propositions did not state that the Bible contained things which scientific history sees to be described according to inaccurate ideas of the time, but that its historical statements were not inspired. Now, as already in his speech he confused what was infallibly and literally accurate with what was inspired, Paul elected to stand or fall on an issue technically distinct from what was present to his own mind—namely, on the tenability at present of certain theological positions. George explained to me that the technical error—which might prove fatal in the Roman courts—was this—that wherea's under the

head of interpretation there were precedents for great liberty, it is only under this head that according to the received phraseology it can be claimed. The theological teaching that the Bible is the Word of God, and that God cannot err, can never be modified. But the clause which meets the situation is—the Bible *rightly interpreted* cannot err. Thus if the critics “by solid reasons,” as the phrase is, prove that secular documents, giving the current views on history, are embodied in the sacred narrative, this belongs to the interpretation of the Bible. Such documents may contain facts not vouched for by the sacred writer as God’s inspired instrument. But they are not errors in God’s Word, but current ideas incorporated,—the “*communis sermo*”—to use the phrase used in later years by Leo XIII. The plain layman is apt to regard this, like all technical language, as quibbling. But it is in reality the application of the principle that God cannot err, to a document in which the Divine authorship includes the adoption of human ideas and language as a vehicle of expression.

And meanwhile, others who were fighting similar battles in France and in Germany were eager in their sympathy. They urged the Count to use his great influence and strike a blow for freedom which should help the specialists in all countries, and emancipate the Catholic thinkers from the thralldom of theological traditions which are outworn. There were journals which promised support, and Paul felt as if he was now preparing for the decisive engagement to which his campaign of the past fifteen years had been leading up. He gathered force and intensity from the sympathy which every post brought him, and grew more and more sanguine of success, when he found that his well-wishers included not only critical scholars but theologians and prelates of influence and position in France and in America.

PART III.

I.

THE brilliance of a clear autumn morning suspicious of frost penetrated into the grimness of Charing Cross station on the morning of our start. We had met to hear the first Mass in the Church at Farm Street, and we got our breakfast in the station. We were deeply imbued with the sense of our pilgrimage. We were full of a soul-consciousness, full of enthusiasm, exaltation, excitement. The clear crisp morning, the emptiness of the streets, the stillness of the dark church, all was sanctified and beautiful, all suited our hopes, our prayers, our courage.

"The coffee is nasty enough for any pilgrims," said Marcelle, as we gathered about an untidy table in the corner of the refreshment-room.

"Such asceticism is dangerous and leads to reaction," said George. "Why not allow us a proper breakfast in the hotel?"

"Why not be lazy and greedy?" protested Marcelle. "Your portmanteau is grossly smart. You altogether have an *air de luxe* which I cannot encourage. But where," she suddenly shrieked, "is Miss Mills? She is going to make us late!"

"She will be here in no time," I said; "but as we came out of church she dropped her bag and broke her bottle of

holy water, and nothing will induce her to get into a railway carriage without holy water."

"I do hope she is not going to make us late."

Meanwhile, Paul was pacing the platform with two men, one of them a foreign priest, in earnest conversation, and presently a third man joined them.

"Disciples?" queried George of Marcelle.

"Of course. But he won't get any breakfast!"

A moment afterwards Paul entered hastily at one door and Miss Mills at another, carrying an immense bag, several shawls and a large bottle under her arm. Behind them to our astonishment, appeared Father Duly.

"They had not got a smaller one," gasped Miss Mills, setting down the bottle in the middle of the table. But we were all busy greeting Father Duly, who looked pale and thin. Paul took some coffee standing. George fed Miss Mills and Marcelle, and I poured out exclamations and inquiries at Father Duly.

"How are you all?" was his answer. "Barefooted and plenty of dried peas in your shoes, and walking all the way in an express carriage? Nach Rom, nach Rom!"

"Oh, do come too; it would be such fun, so delightful to have you!"

"So that's your spirit, such fun indeed! No, no, I'm only come to say good-bye and give you a blessing."

The emotion that underlay our nervous nonsense almost choked me as he said the last words. Something in the gravity of George Sutcliffe's warm greeting to the young priest brought over me in a wave all that was anxious and dangerous in our journey. I felt like an amateur in a boat when he sees experienced sailors exchange looks of understanding between themselves. I had been filled with hope, sweetness and light to the hiding of fear; now anxiety looked out of those kind priestly eyes. Before he spoke again we hurried out on to the platform, and it was not until

he was standing outside the door of the carriage we had chosen that he went on :—

“I came up last night,” he said, looking round at us all as we stood there, “by the Bishop’s wish.”

We were silent and astonished. He paused, then he went on : “He sends you each and all his blessing, and he will say Mass for you every day while you are away. He says that you must remember that he has a claim upon your prayers, both as your spiritual father and as your seeming enemy. He bids me tell you that his own responsibility in the matter is over, now that the propositions have been sent up to the Holy Office, and he will take no steps to press for their condemnation. You are acting on your own initiative, and you must take the consequences. His prayer is that whatever those consequences may be, they may be blessed in your souls and in your lives. ‘I hope,’ he ended by saying, ‘that neither of those two men forgets that other precious lives are dependent upon theirs.’”

We had not stirred while he spoke, only George half-consciously touched Marcelle’s hand as he finished. Paul was standing behind me, and I could not see his face.

“Tell the Bishop,” he said, “that we are deeply thankful for his kindness and for his prayers. We know well that he is not our enemy, and we shall pray that he may not be the enemy of truths that are precious to us.”

The last words jarred upon me. The engine gave a shrill whistle.

“Give, oh give us the blessing,” Marcelle cried, and he had just time to say the words, while the men stood bowed with bare heads, and Marcelle and I, with entire disregard of the bystanders, knelt on one knee. A moment later we were all in our seats. Father Duly was waving his hat with Celtic energy. Marcelle and George were sitting very still side by side.

“How very beautifully the Count spoke !” Miss Mills ex-

claimed in an audible aside, and then with a shriek, "I've lost my bottle, my precious bottle! I must have put it on the ground just as we were receiving the blessing. Lizzie, we have no holy water! Why do you always leave such things to me?"

It was impossible not to laugh, but the poor little thing was in a ferment.

"And your poor bag has been soaked with it!"

"That's one comfort," she said.

Paul alone was grave and sympathetic. After all, he said, we should soon be in a Catholic country where holy water abounded, and scapulars hung on most nails. She immediately asked him what scapulars he wore—she herself had nineteen or twenty—and how he kept them clean, and offered to make a special little bag to keep them in.

To my own surprise and pleasure I found that he did wear one, and with the gravest courtesy he begged to be allowed the special bag. From that hour Miss Mills swore to his complete and absolute orthodoxy. But I think she had a vague sense of something troubling to the mind in our expedition, in some of the things she heard said at the start, and in many later on. Accordingly she elected to discover that Mr. Sutcliffe was a dangerous and heterodox thinker with a bad and perilous influence on the poor dear Count. The subjugation of Miss Mills took Paul about half an hour, then he changed his seat to the one between her and me. During the six weeks since my great loss, we had not met often, and when we did meet I felt that I became more, not less, in awe of him. Something very slightly aloof, unconsciously distant, seemed to be included in his gentle reverence for me since our engagement. While he sat beside me in the train, although he divined and entered into much that I was feeling on leaving England for the first time, and although I enjoyed being the object of his thoughts and words in that way, I was not really at my ease. I can see

him now, leaning back and turning towards me, his head a little bent, his face very white, with the deep dark lines that "curious thought and suffering give". As he did so, I had a momentary, swiftly effaced impression of vigilance on the part of Marcelle towards us two. Then she went on with a low-voiced talk I could not follow. Strange that the one person I was happily quite capable of ignoring was George Sutcliffe. From the moment I had seen him come into our hotel the night before, all morbid nonsense, all uncalled-for emotions had seemed as absurd and unreal as he would conceivably have thought them himself. They became at once hardly worthy even of laughter, not deserving of enough attention for conscious contempt.

"And the novel was left unfinished?" Paul said.

"I could not have gone on," I answered quickly.

"No, indeed," he said. "Do you know, in my life I have been fated several times to have moments of intense exaltation, of clear intellectual life, movement, freedom, broken into by nature and death. Then the complete human being is revenged on the poor mind for having taken to itself a share it can never keep here below. All things combine to torture and subdue it."

"Yes," I said, with a sudden vehement agreement.

"My mother died when I was first at the university, dreaming proud dreams, which uplifted a boy's weak brain beyond its power. I wish you had known my mother, Lisa. I wonder if you would have seen her as I saw and see her now? Young, delicate, not happy, a soul that ached under the most conventional of lives, and wrapped up its hopes and its dreams in little me. And when I was least worthy of her she died, and my father never knew all, not half all I had known of her life, and he would not have cared if he had."

"Was she like you?" I asked, glancing at him in admiration and affection; and those feelings, like all others I felt towards him, were as true as I could make them.

"*Heureusement, non*," he laughed. "What flattering eyes they are, after all!" he added, as I blushed and turned away. I felt as if chaff from him was what I did not like. He gave a deep sigh.

"You are very tired."

"So tired, Lisa, so wearied, so sick of life, of struggle, of effort. If one could but be put out to grass for a month and not find that other things have sped on meanwhile! But while fools are never tired we can never rest. And did not your great Burke say that our lives were mostly spent in fighting the blunders and sins of others with sins and blunders of our own?"

"He spoke of public life."

"And what is public life but action among men? You associate it with Parliament and the British voter and general elections. I mean the struggle at the springs of thought, the liberating of the spirit of man. This is the life of true public spirit, not without votes and not without meetings. But unfortunately in that world there are still plenty of pocket boroughs."

I could see that a black influence was upon him, of a kind new to me. I came to see that this element had slept in the peace of Peak Hall. A concrete, unmanageable world provoked it in him as much as solitude provokes it in most people.

A gap came; a gap of steamer and to me horror, while the others enjoyed themselves, and I became unknown to them. My next pleasant impression was strong coffee, the delight of the French tongue about me, a glorious sense of novelty and freshness and adventure. I could write volumes on it, all truly comic, to a generation that goes to Paris for a night and to Rome for a week-end. I will forbear—I will rest in the recollection of silently leaning back in a carriage, alone with Marcelle and Miss Mills, watching the red sunset over the wide flat country, with the occasional stimulus of

trees and houses shaped and coloured as I had never seen them shaped and coloured before. I was full of joy, rest, hope. Marcelle and I said Compline together, and Miss Mills occupied herself with mysterious rosaries of the most complicated kind. I had wanted to escape from myself, I felt as if I had done so.

Here was a big, free, moving world, wonderfully coloured even when sinking into darkness. I was at one again, unified by pleasure and peace combined. Marcelle gazed at me with her dark eyes, and their strong honest, spiritual light and strength seemed to enter into my soul.

"We are going to Rome, dearest," she said suddenly.

"To the Mother of Churches and the home of the heart," I quoted.

"It's enough to say Rome," pouted Marcelle, and she was right.

Suddenly as it became dark she sat on the arm between our seats and leant towards me.

"I feel an impulse to confession, Lisa. I've had horrid ideas about you. They were not real, were they, *chérie*? Tell me quick. They were only involuntary, like thoughts against the faith. Kiss me, I will never have them again."

I was too excited, too happy then to be troubled by what she had said, but the warning note came back to me later. After all, I was young; I was full of life; I was abroad for the first time. Is it wonderful that I ignored the shadows?

II.

WE had hardly climbed down from our high carriages on to the platform in Paris—and I was just perceiving the peculiar atmospheric sense, almost smell, of that city for the first time—when a little man, bustling up, exclaimed to another following him :—

“*Le voilà ! Il est ici. Voilà le Comte !*” And with his hat in his left hand he was bowing low, as he held out the right one to Paul.

“*Ah, Dubac, c’est bien, well met ! Et l’Abbé Cambon.*”

But the priest who had followed the first-comer was overtaken by nearly a dozen other men pressing their way through the crowd, bowing and gesticulating.

“Gracious ! how tiresome,” said Marcelle aside to me in English. “I thought they would leave him one evening in quiet.” But her voice betrayed gratification all the same. A very smart young man instantly claimed her attention, and after some joke with him she greeted warmly a little brown shrivelled Abbé with almost feverishly brilliant eyes. I stepped back from the group that went on increasing, and found myself by George Sutcliffe. He was standing with his hands in his pockets frowning darkly.

“Good Lord !” he muttered to me, “is this what our journey is to be like ?”

“And where is the luggage ?” broke in Miss Mills.

“One satellite seized our tickets and has gone for our luggage, another has the bag and rugs I was carrying for

Marcelle. You must resign yourself to a royal passivity, Miss Mills. But now for it——”

At that moment the Count, whose head rose above all his followers, was looking round for George.

“Sutcliffe,” he said, “may I make you known to friends and sympathisers?”

George attacked the group more as if the bows and handshakings were the enemy’s fire. But I saw that in a moment or two he had become interested. In fact there were some very distinguished men in the group, and the seeds of more than one friendship were first sown that evening. Presently Marcelle came round to me with the little Abbé of the extraordinary eyes. He greeted me kindly, and protested that I looked dead tired.

“But are these gentlemen going to make you wait here all the evening? It is not very polite. Let me summon a *fiacre*. Put yourselves in, ladies, and be off.”

The Abbé was kindly but also a man of the world. It was certainly rather unconventional for us to be standing about on the edge of the odd, vehement little crowd of *intellectuels* of all classes and types, gesticulating and talking round the Count and George. The latter seemed to be eking out his supply of French with an unconscious imitation of the gestures of those about him, but Paul was if possible more still than usual.

I have been told since then that the hotel to which we went that night was as expensive as it was ugly, old fashioned and aristocratic. I can only suppose that the very small bill presented for myself and Miss Mills was in inverse proportion to what was charged to the Count, who was evidently well known to the establishment.

I remember nothing worthy of record that night or the following morning. What is still vivid to me is the next evening. I think Paul had been seeing people all through the day, and George also, and probably Marcelle; while Miss

Mills and I had been to Notre Dame and the Tuileries. Paul's constant correspondence with the leaders of Catholic thought in France had evidently given to our Roman expedition, in the eyes of those friends, the character of a public event of the utmost importance. We dined early and in a private room. Before we had finished an admirable but short meal, Paul was told that several gentlemen were waiting for him, and he immediately went to join them. A voluble but very solemn group—some in evening clothes with light overcoats, but most of them almost defiantly motley in their wear—were standing round Paul in the badly lit hall, when Marcelle, Miss Mills and I, in black cloaks, and hats with thick veils, joined them. We seemed to be put into a *fiacre* by one simultaneous action on the part of Paul's friends, and I felt extremely British and angular, while Miss Mills evidently gloried in the perfection of her own bows and polite exclamations.

"There are no manners in the world," she explained to me in the *fiacre*, "to be compared to those of truly pious, French Catholic gentlemen." Dear little woman, if she had but known what her old friends and employers the Legitimist families would have thought of the religious and political opinions of her new acquaintances!

I think we had a long drive over the cobbled stones of the narrow streets, after we had crossed the river. I remember Marcelle's voice ringing above the noises in joyous chatter all the time. At last we drew up at an old-fashioned porter's lodge where we got down and crossed a dull gravelled courtyard enlivened by a few evergreens in tubs and pots, and a little melancholy fountain in the middle. There was something mysterious about the entrance on the further side. We rang a cracked bell and the large door opened, apparently without hands, and we found ourselves in a very narrow passage, while an unembodied voice said, "*à droite, Mesdames,*" with a severity that appeared to doubt of our intentions in

trying to get in at all. We made our way round several sharp corners, and then there was the door into the chapel and an abrupt descent of three steps within it. The chapel was larger than I expected and quite full. The altar and ornaments and indeed the whole chapel were in the execrable style of French taste in ecclesiastical art twenty years ago—I think it must have been the worst possible moment, but I do not know what excesses may have been committed since then. Still, in spite of paper and wax flowers and imitation candles and really terrible pictures, the place was full of life, intensity and warmth of feeling, and a still spirituality that exalted and rested the mind from the first moment.

Marcelle, Miss Mills and I found three unoccupied *prie-dieu* chairs with some little difficulty. I had an impression of far more men than women being present. We had only spent a few moments in prayer, when I heard a clear incisive voice give out a text, and looking up saw in the pulpit L'Abbé Cambon, the priest of the singularly brilliant eyes and worn-out cassock, who had met us at the Gare du Nord.

The opening words were a quotation from a famous article in the *Avenir* in which Lammenais, Lacordaire, and Montalembert made public their appeal to Rome :—

“Eight centuries ago, Philip Augustus, led away by the violence of his passions, determined to repudiate a queen to whom he had always denied her conjugal rights. Ingeburg of Danemark appeared before a council, composed partly of laymen, partly of ecclesiastics, and they read to her the sentence which deprived her of her crown. The poor virgin of the north did not understand the language of the Franks. . . . But when they had explained to her by signs the destiny which was in store for her, she gave utterance to a cry which is of every language and in every heart: ‘Rome! Rome! Rome!’

“She was brought back to her prison. But her cry had crossed the mountains, and the echoes of the Eternal City had repeated it. Celestin III., and after him Innocent III.,

then occupied the See of Peter. The divorce was declared null, the servile council censured, the kingdom placed under an interdict, until Ingeburg was restored to the throne of France.

“And we also give utterance to this immortal cry. The successor of Innocent III. is at the Vatican.

“The pilgrims are about to depart. May God protect them!”

There was a movement among the men present, many of whom were standing at the end of the chapel, as they recognised the quotation, that was almost an applause. Then M. Cambon, with a curious austerity of bearing, went on in a low voice. I can only recall the briefest outline of what he said, but it was something to the following effect:—

“Ingeburg of Danemark was in the right, and she obtained justice. We too shall obtain justice. We know it! These deputies, as we may call them, for they carry with them the hopes and aspirations of all lovers of light and freedom, are sure of their intentions. Their action is straight, is direct, is loyal. What is their cause? Their cause, briefly, is this. The eternal truths of religion are in apparent antagonism to the unalterable truths of science. We all know that this antagonism is only apparent. The real collision is between human accretions and the human interpretations of the truths of faith and the assertions of fallible scientists. They seek, as we all seek, a better way. Let the men of science prove their own assertions; let the theologians prove theirs—each in the light of patient and cautious inquiry. The men of science say to the theologians: ‘We yield to none in our submission to the truths of faith and the teaching of the Church, but we demand of you a candid examination of your textbooks. We demand of you the removal from your ordinary treatises, not of the eternal truths committed to the Church but of the opinions of individual men who interpreted those truths according to the knowledge of a prescientific

epoch.' These men did according to the best of their abilities then, and we must do our best according to our ability now; and those that come afterwards—if they do according to their ability in the future—will erase many and many an error that we now believe to be a truth!

"No truth can be lost, no truth can be endangered. But there is great danger for the man who would try to interpret those truths. It may be his duty, but many duties are dangerous. Let him remember that while truth can never be lost, souls may be—the very souls for whom Christ made His Church. Let him tremble lest he impose his own thought as though it were Divine truth; and when he has lost all confidence in himself, we shall wisely put our confidence in him.

"We shall have justice; but it may not be justice as we picture it to ourselves. To judge of times and seasons rests with the Church and not with us. We must appeal not as teachers but as children. There is no one of us who would say in so many words: 'I know that I can judge better than the Church if she decides against me'; but we must beware of a temper of mind that conceals such a thought so cleverly that we are not conscious of it ourselves. Such tribunals as those to which our appeal is made do not indeed claim to decide what is infallibly true for all time, but they claim submission, and they claim to control the pace at which truth is developed. And to this claim it is the proud humility of the Catholic to bow. You are loyal now because you are so sure that the Church will agree with you. I trust, I believe that you are right, but I implore you to make no mistake in your hearts or in the manner of your appeal. 'A humble and contrite heart, O Lord, Thou shalt not despise.'"

The sermon, of which these are the briefest and quite inadequate notes, seemed to me simple and obvious enough,

but to my astonishment George told me a few days afterwards that it had been a good deal criticised.

“ I heard several of the Frenchmen say to each other that the Abbé need not have seized the opportunity for a lecture—it was hardly the moment for teaching the catechism, as if we were a set of boys at Sunday school. The French mind is certainly difficult to understand. Do you know that a few of these enthusiasts of the Catholic Church are not practising Catholics at all? It was considered a matter of course that some of them left the chapel before benediction. M. l'Abbé Cambon says that with some—he hopes not many—it is only an adoption of the latest intellectual fashion which includes a *culte* for the Comte d'Etranges.”

III.

I CANNOT now remember the name of the town where we first stopped after leaving Paris. I think it was the seat of some Catholic university or college. Mr. Sutcliffe, who had taken a hint from the Abbé de Cambon as to *les convenances* wished to send us off at once to our hotel. Marcelle was inclined to rebel; she wanted to see more of her brother's eager admirers, some of whom she already knew. I am sure George was anxious to keep her away from those who made the fringe round the more distinguished men we met.

Twenty years ago young women on the Continent were submitted to more regulations than they are now. Certainly in spite of her knowledge of the world, and her quite experienced manner, Marcelle kicked pretty hard against conventionality when it came in her way.

It was very cold and late when we got out of the train, and George growled when he saw a little group waiting for us, a shabby, dusty little group, but still with obvious gentlemen among them.

"You must get off at once," he said, a little roughly, to Marcelle.

"*Mais, certainement, non.* I see M. de Lescasses, and oh, how amusing, M. Roget and the Abbé de Luttes—the rest are little professors of no note, but probably nice."

"You can't stay talking to those men at this hour and in this cold."

"But I can."

"Lisa and Miss Mills will be frozen, and with Lisa's deep mourning."

"But why don't they go off at once? I don't want to keep them." Her voice was shrill, and one or two of the group round the Count, who was at a little distance, were turning towards her.

George took her arm. "Nonsense, Marcelle; come with them at once. I insist upon it."

She disengaged herself and hurried in front of us to the hotel omnibus, white with anger. George, having seen our luggage piled on the top of the shaky little vehicle, walked away without speaking to her.

We rattled off to the hotel in silence. I was of course on George's side, but I did not think he realised how disappointing it was to Marcelle to see old friends so near without speaking to them. She refused to see anything in the least unusual in two engaged couples travelling about in this way. With Miss Mills as a figure-head it was all right, I thought, if we were careful of etiquette; but Marcelle had now for some years travelled about with Paul, aiding in his propaganda, and she was accustomed to doing things in her own way. That night, after hastily drinking some soup, she kissed me vehemently, with tears in her eyes, and went to bed. Miss Mills and I shared a room next to hers, and I heard Paul, just after we had gone up, knock at her door.

"Won't you come down and see them?"

"Non, non, je suis trop fatiguée. Je me couche."

Next morning we went on to Lucerne, and we arrived there very tired and a little cross, with the exception of Paul, who although silent and abstracted was evidently in good spirits. We arrived late at night, and put up at the Schweizerhof. At daylight I was at the window, drinking in my first revelation of the glories of the mountains of the Lord. "Day unto day uttereth speech." And is there any utterance comparable to the great chant of the snow-clad mountain-

tops singing matins in the sunrise? When I came out from the Schweizerhof, the waters of the lake were blue and dazzling in my eyes, and the bells of the cathedral were ringing as I hurried along to reach it. The thin tapering towers stood out, sharply defined, black against the brightness. A few people were making their way over the cobbles and up the broad shallow steps. It was a minor feast day, and there were many peasants in their national dresses.

It was to me wonderful to be with so many who had never known anything but this rich homelike mingling of the supernatural and the natural. Thank God, our spiritual joys are not dependent on these things; but looking back I recall a singular, individual joy in that first Mass among a Catholic peasantry. It does no harm to other pictures in the gallery of memory, and yet it is something apart and unlike the rest. I had a strong sense of having been among them all before. It seemed a return to something deeply rooted in me, something that had been habitual somehow and somewhere.

We stayed a few minutes after Mass, looking at the grotesque, painted figures above the altars, quite a collection of holy, hideous, wooden people, and yet for me not without a quaint charm. And then we came back in the crisp coldness by the lake in its wondrous glory. The place was very empty, the season of course long past. Twenty years have made a difference in Lucerne, for the worse since then, as all the hotel and kursaal element has enormously increased. After breakfast, as Marcelle was busy with Paul, I went out alone.

I climbed up, I think by the direction of a kind old woman who understood my German, towards the Franciscan chapel and the Drei Linden. I was immensely pleased by the Stations of the Cross in the open air, and I felt the same joyous combination of things new and old that I had experienced in the morning. At last I came to the plain whitewashed, wooden-gabled front of the little Franciscan

chapel. On a bench near the door sat a poor man eating the dole given him through the little turning cupboard in the low whitewashed wall of the monastery. Here were to be found the marked simplicity and poverty, amidst scenic glories of mountain and lake, that would have satisfied St. Francis' pure, stern taste. When years afterwards I stood in front of St. Damiano's in Assisi, I was at once recalled to the chapel at Lucerne.

I went in and found the atmosphere very stale, the statues and ornaments gaudy, the benches stiff and hard. Yet it was unmistakably and curiously prayerful. I sat there some time, and at last felt rising in me, piercing the joy of piety and the happiness of new beauties and new scenes, a curious discomfort of soul, an indescribable malaise. By one of those sudden revulsions of the mind that take hold of one in any excitement, I became acutely and fearfully conscious of my mother's death. The pain got hold of my heart in a physical grip. I knelt down and buried my head in my hands and prayed, but not happily.

Somebody had come into the chapel. I had for a moment an impression that it was the man who had been eating the dole. The pain at my heart would not go, and it seemed to be rising in a suffocating way in my throat. I wanted air, and I rose to go out. Then as I turned round, I saw George Sutcliffe saying his rosary at the last bench. I know that a swift colour mounted to my face, and instead of going down the church, I knelt suddenly before a statue of the Poverello to gain time. In a moment I was all right, and I walked down the chapel. George followed me, and when we got outside, asked me if I would go with him to the Drei Linden. I felt at once the matter-of-course, unemotional friendliness his presence always gave me, as we walked together past the low walls of the Franciscan enclosure. I had not been quite alone with him for a long time.

"How wonderful Paul is!" he said suddenly. "I can't

think how he endured those hours and hours of talk—with fools as well as wise men. And he kept them in hand all the time without discouraging them. We left them all enchanted in Paris, and yet he would not let them do a single thing they wanted to do. There has been no publicity and no fuss. He will allow no irresponsible paragraphs. But I believe he is using a few of these men for some announcement in the papers later on, to be timed to help him forward when he is in Rome."

"What a gift he has for preventing things from becoming absurd," I answered. "I shall never forget his face that night in Paris, when we all came back from the chapel and stood together in the dining-room in the hotel, most of the lights out, and the sleepy waiters ready to use bad language. Didn't he touch a magnificent note in his good-bye? What was it he asked his friends for? Their prayers, their patience, their silence, their mutual tolerance during the weeks to follow their parting. What astonished me most was the way in which he took his own authority over them for granted, and the way in which they accepted it. What a singular position he has!"

"No wonder he believes in party action, as he was born to lead a party," said George. "One quite lost sight of the oddness of some of those fellows while he was talking. I was ready to be embraced, on both cheeks if necessary, and to embrace the grimmest back again, I had such a sense of our all being in one boat making for some great victory."

"I couldn't sleep because '*les vraies lumières*,' '*l'indépendance de l'esprit humain*,' '*l'amour du vrai*' rang in my head all night," I answered.

"No wonder you and Marcelle are tired. Marcelle was awfully sweet this morning as we came back from Mass, but you know she is entirely absorbed in all this business. She had not the least wish to come out this glorious morning. She would rather listen to Paul talking all day and all night."

"You must not forget that it is the habit of years," I answered. "I never realised it till we came abroad. She has a good deal to do with this curious little international movement, and it is intensely exciting, isn't it?"

"Intensely," he said rather sadly. "It is strange," he added; "one would not think her in the least reserved, yet I have only lately grasped all this fully."

"That is because she opens some rooms in her mind so completely, and they are so crystal clear inside, that you forget to see if any more are left shut up. There is a great deal we don't know at all. But I am quite, quite sure that at present you must try not to thwart her wish to help Paul."

"Yes, but as the Abbé Cambon said to me in Paris, 'There are followers of his who are not from any point of view her natural associates'."

He was silent, then he went on with an effort: "Lisa, am I never to thwart her? I give in so much against my own judgment, hoping that I am wrong and Paul right, on the larger lines he sketches out for us. But where I am quite certainly right, and I see that she will suffer, have I so little influence that I ought not to risk telling her so? Is that what you mean?"

"No, no," I answered hurriedly. "I daresay I was quite wrong, only——"

"Only what?"

"Only I don't think you quite enter into her point of view. I don't think you realise the excitement and enjoyment she gets from these odd little crowds and groups."

"Poor child!" he said, "it's very natural, he is a very great man." And then he changed the subject.

It struck neither of us that one strange part of our talk lay in the fact that I was the promised wife of the great man in question.

IV.

WE left Lucerne by the four o'clock train. The carriages were already over-heated, and Marcelle and I were glad to stand in the outside passage whenever we were not in the tunnels. As we passed by the lake side, the sunset first flushed, then flamed in great columns of rosy, glorious light till the snow peaks in their lonely majesty were absorbed in the flush of the heavens, and the waters below gave back a new aspect of the vision. In spite of the noise of the train I never felt such a hush, such a speaking stillness as in that awful sunset. Awful because the whole scene was too great for us. The huge rocky heights dwarfed us with an eternal past with which we had nothing to do : while the pageant of living, quivering light revealed in the midst of infinite masses of cloud seemed to realise the light before the Throne. If we little mortals had no part in those rocks of ages, those eternal snows, what part might we not have in the pageant of living, searching light ? The signs of a great majestic order were all about us, the massed rocky heights in dim but terrible array, every peak, every chasm cut and shaped according to law ; the water below, fed by the springs of the Lawgiver, the trees, each after its kind had come forth by law. These truisms came on me in a new way with a new force as I strained to see the highest peaks above me, and the most shady corners in the waters below, and then looked up again to be dazzled and overcome by the great representation in the sky. All these

things were according to law ; but was I, who belonged to their order, who was a subject even as they were subjects, fitted to take my place in the great pageant? I never felt so breathlessly conscious of myself, my mortality, my wretchedness as in that sunset, and yet it seemed as if my whole being were, willingly or no, part of a great chant, a great acknowledgment, a great adoration.

I had not noticed the others, but at last Paul touched my arm.

“ It is nearly over and very cold, you must come in.”

My eyes were dazed, but I could see that his were too, and I knew they would make him suffer for that hour of revelation.

Often nature awakens the pagan, intimate sense of kinship, homely and wistful. But that great scene on the Lake of Lucerne awakened rather the holy fear of faith, the trembling acknowledgment of the supernatural. We were very quiet in our compartment after that. Marcelle seemed subdued and tender in her manner towards George, and I once caught him looking at me as if he would say, “ You see how very happy we are. What an ass I was to be in the dumps this morning ! ” But as we got into the great tunnel I thought gravely of their position and of my own. I could not imagine how George would ever be contented with what Marcelle could give him. Even allowing that I then did not quite understand her, still I knew she loved him. It was the love of youth ; it had tenderness and a delight in his gifts and his charms ; it had many things that will not fit into words, but it was not in the very least submissive. Her imagination, her loyalty, her devotion, were given to Paul. But partly, perhaps because of her very reverence for her brother, she never, while talking with him, had the look of bubbling enjoyment and high spirits she had at times with George. I could hear her little happy laugh from time to time even in the tunnel, which was oppressing my nerves into a black

outlook. Miss Mills was very funnily asleep, all crooked somehow with a huge undisciplined rosary of chestnuts she had bought in Lucerne round her neck. It must have been very uncomfortable, and might account for her odd position and movements. I could see, not hear, that the little brown nose was snoring. She was opposite to me and next to the other two. Wraps filled the seat between myself and Paul. He was leaning back absolutely still, and absolutely awake. It was hardly safe to look at him. I knew he was thinking, thinking high abstract thoughts; and in that cold dual way of his he was planning too. Should I ever understand him? Should I ever breathe quite freely in life with him? Something in this tunnel made me feel as if I should never breathe again. Once when I was travelling with George to Peak Hall, he had said horrid things about Paul. "He will take everything and give you nothing." The words came back to me. Were there demons in the tunnel muttering and then shouting those things? I moved restlessly, hoping somebody would speak to me and break the impression. "He will take all and give nothing," said the noises in the train. "It has nearly crushed Marcelle, but she is escaping. You can't. Look at him now, would you dare to go against him? Will you ever know what he is thinking about? What he cares for? Whom he cares for? He only cares for Marcelle, and you know it." Would we ever come out of these bowels of the earth? What an eternal tunnel this was! Had the sunset been the last glimpse of heaven, and was I in an inferno? "She only cares for Paul." "Nonsense." "Well, she would only *have* cared for him if you had not interfered, and George Sutcliffe would have got over his sorrow quickly, and perhaps—— Look at him now, strong, human, happy. He is not handsome, he is altogether too square——" but I jumped up, and was going to ask Paul the time, to know how much longer we must endure, when a faint light glimmered. I looked out

of the window, and the stars were shining in God's sky above us. We were on the other side of the Alps. I put down the window, and drank of fresh air and returning common-sense.

I had caught a chill watching the sunset, and by the time we reached Milan I had a sore throat, and was quite feverish. An excellent young English doctor was produced by a friend of Paul's. He got the fever down very quickly, and I lay in bed with an odd sense of well-being and rest. In times of strain and excitement I should always recommend a well-managed cold. Miss Mills was a born nurse, and when in her native element was quite an amusing companion. She had lived for years in French families, where the art of relieving a dull life is carried to perfection. And now I was as glad of her little bright ways and oddities, as a distraction from too much to think of, as they could have been with too little.

Marcelle was delighted with the Count's friends in Milan. He was received with enthusiasm, and had again, as in Paris, to restrain his admirers. There was the same slight sense of mystery I had felt before. We had always known Paul to be something of a power on the Continent, but we had had no expectation of the number and variety of his friends. Nor did he ever tell us what to expect at our different halts on the way. Only it was evident that we must go as he settled we must go, and arrive at the hours he had chosen. I think, however, he was surprised himself at the amount of sympathy he received.

As I lay in bed in a high, narrow room, Marcelle would come in and tell me what was going on. There was one new feature in Milan. There were one or two Countesses, of high rank it seemed, who chaperoned Marcelle, and satisfied George's social scruples. Marcelle reported such enthusiasm for science and for faith, such confidence in the new intellectual lights, such faith in Rome! But they were all combative against somebody, some set of hopeless bullies

vaguely at times called "those in authority," or "the theologians," or "the *piccoli signorini*," who would interfere. There may have been men as distinguished as some of the remarkable thinkers we had met in Paris. But I did not know their names, except that of a great German, who had come South on purpose to meet Paul. Also for the first time I had a feminine perception of our being somehow complicated with political aims and objects, a suspicion that made me turn over again in memory our experience in Paris to see if I could detect the same thing there, but I could not.

I kept them nearly a week at Milan, which I am sure was very upsetting to Paul's plans. But he showed not the faintest impatience, and would not go on until the doctor declared that I was more than fit to travel.

I was in fact far better for the rest, and able to enjoy two wonderful days in Venice. There we were met by no crowd, big or little. But Paul had, it seemed, introductions that worked like magic. The first day he spent incognito showing me Venice. He had a passionate love of St. Mark's, and he knew it, in and out. He had been there when almost a boy, and ever since, in hours of sickness or weariness, if he sought for a home for his imagination to rest in, it was to let it wander under those ethereal porticoes, or rest abashed in the stern glooms of the interior. I was touched to see how kindly he wanted me to enjoy it. I caught him looking at me as one watches a child to see if it really likes a new present. But the dream of many coloured marbles and magic forms and yet curiously concrete historical figures was soon touched, though not spoilt, by another aspect of life in Venice. There it was not among thinkers of the day, *les intellectuels*, that we were thrown. It was into the heart of a practical social movement, originated by one or two remarkable men, not of high rank but professional, one of the chief of whom was a solicitor. The world has heard much of their doings since then, and their work has been

confused in many minds with Christian Socialism. Lovers of the poor, practical and modern in aim and method, they were never socialist. They were intensely, passionately devoted to the Pope, but they combined this with a rational and affectionate adherence to the House of Savoy. They could never forget the hateful dominion of Austria. They mourned over Rome. Why had not the king made a great capital in the North and developed Florence or Turin with all their capabilities?

They were charming, those Venetians, strong and simple, honest and pious. Paul was enthusiastic about these people, and they became enthusiastic about him. It was sufficiently obvious that they had very little idea of what he was about. But there was something in him that made people get excited. And unconsciously he treated them to the same ways and manner he had shown throughout his journey. He came with admirable introductions; he was going to Rome. I believe some of them thought he was a friend and disciple to Léon Harmel. He talked of him and of others of his friends, whose lives were chiefly devoted to the improvement of the lives of the poor. Then he was going to Rome. His sister was intensely eager to understand their work, their methods, their organisation. Somehow, we were approved and beloved.

There was a large confraternity of young men whose evening service in St. Mark's we were allowed to attend. Never have I seen a warmer, more masculine piety. It was the eve of the Immaculate Conception. There was an initiative in their singing, a kind of roll in the chant that had something in it suggestive of seamen and the sea. Meanwhile, a crowd of men of all ages were going to confession, and I stood for over an hour in the long line outside the confessional of an Italian who could speak French. Next morning in the darkness we groped our way to St. Mark's, which was all alive with people and with lights. A great crowd,

almost no sound, only the occasional tinkle of a handbell and the low murmur of a priest saying Mass.

We heard Mass, made our thanksgiving, and came away feeling how truly Venice had been called the most religious city in Italy.

It was still before the dawn when our gondolier took us through the canals to the station for the South. There were only a few lights, multiplied in the darkly moving sluggish water; the air was full of bells, all the churches were ringing for the festa. They met us joyously round corners, echoed after us down narrow canals, now muffled, now tinkling afresh in another direction. They were full of lightness and joy and brightness, and a kind of childlike high spirits.

Life might be dark, the waters turbid and treacherous, the past sad, the future uncertain, but "Eviva Maria, Eviva Maria," sang the bells of Venice, as their good-bye to these modern pilgrims, members of the great multitude who always have and always will pass on to Rome.

V.

WE were on the steps of St. Peter's at seven in the morning on the 10th of December. We had hurried on, because a rumour had reached Paul in Venice that Cardinal Mattei would soon be leaving Rome on a foreign mission. We had arrived in the middle of the night, and after some brief wakeful hours, we had got up and come off to St. Peter's.

It was a glorious morning. We were very silent. There would be too much to say if we said anything at all. Paul was the only one who had been in Rome before, and perhaps therefore this visit to St. Peter's was less altogether wonderful to him than it was to us. To him it could not be quite simple. Afterwards, when I knew the Basilica better, I loved it more, but with a difference. At first I was not conscious of the wrecks and the relics of human story beneath and about it. It was not ancient or mediæval Rome that met us that day. It was not even the glories of the saints or of Christian history that we thought of. It was the heart of living Catholicism, it was the fount whence had flowed to us personally the first Christian truths learnt from our mothers, it was the earthly channel of the actual sacraments by which we had lived and were living. To George, I think, most of all, that first visit was a great event.

He had never been keen on getting to Rome. Of course he might easily have gone there before if he had wished to. I think he hardly knew himself why he never had gone. There had been some sense of repulsion to the idea of the ecclesi-

astical court at the Vatican, some fear of Rome proving a strain to loyalty; a sort of clinging to the home life of the Church in its simplicity. And now there was, I think, a great revelation in St. Peter's. I hardly venture to guess what it was, unless it was the overpowering sense of the spiritual sweetness that radiates from this heart of the Church through thousands of channels to the very ends of the earth. It is not as the Basilica of the Pope, however honoured and beloved, that St. Peter's leaves you breathless. It seems almost more in touch with distant poverty-stricken chapels; with fever-stricken missionaries; with all the world of the tempted and the sorrowful, than with its own material or official surroundings. This, I think, was the great surprise that took George captive, but in that surprise were written divine secrets I dare not guess at.

As to the æsthetic aspect of St. Peter's I cannot, happily for readers nauseated with criticism, say anything. The sense of vastness was to me achieved with stupendous success. And as to defects? If you have a friend with marked individuality of countenance conveying to you a great mind and a great soul, do you ever stop to wish that his nose or his chin were more beautiful to the eye? You will tolerate, and even love things in that face which would be insufferable in another. Would you have him altered in any way?

The unæsthetic nature of these remarks only shows that no more should be said here.

Paul had gone back before us, and when, after a wild rush round the Vatican galleries we, chattering cheerfully, reached the hotel sitting-room in time for *déjeuner* at half-past eleven, we found him looking as black as thunder. Cardinal Mattei had left Rome ten days ago, and nobody knew when he would be back.

"They said they would send me his address, but I see that they don't want me to have it," he said. "His Eminence

assured me that he would let me know his movements. Here is his letter," and he began to read:—

"Fiez vous à moi, mon cher Comte, pour vous mettre au courant de tous mes mouvements. Je passerai l'hiver à Rome, mais si des circonstances inattendus me forcent à quitter la Cité Éternelle je vous en avertirai auparavant."

The Cardinal's secretaries had, it seemed, never heard of the Comte d'Etranges, and were civil, but puzzled concerning him. At last a Monsignore had appeared on the scene who had heard the Cardinal speak of the Count's services to the Church in France. He did not know that His Eminence had had any recent communications from the Count, but then, of the Cardinal's infinitely numerous affairs he knew but a small quarter. *Enfin*, as soon as they knew of the Cardinal's next address, Paul should have it; at present he was in retreat, and could not be disturbed.

Paul hardly spoke or ate during our meal of which we others were desperately in need. Once or twice we spoke to him, and he was almost rude in his absence of response. It was the first time he had ever failed in his impassive but perfect manners towards me, and I was excessively annoyed. It was unfair to be so angry; but there are people, who if in an angry temper themselves, provoke it exceedingly in others. But he was soon to excite my sympathies far too deeply for me to be able to sulk over any such passing want of self-control.

We had come, by the advice of some friends of Paul's, to the hotel in the Piazza Minerva, and there, after a few days of uncertainty, we decided to settle down, with the exception of George Sutcliffe, who took lodgings for himself on high ground, near the Pincio Gardens.

Paul and Marcelle engaged a suite of four rooms on the first floor, and Miss Mills and I chose two small but cheery bedrooms and a little sitting-room much higher up. After a struggle in Paris, I had made Marcelle realise that I must

go my own way, choose my own rooms, and pay for them myself. That being once settled, I could use her apartment as freely as my own. Although a little damped by the disappointment as to Cardinal Mattei, we were too young and too sanguine not to enjoy ourselves, as we arranged our few possessions and made our rooms as habitable as we could. We expected to be in them over Christmas, but we had no notion that we should not pack our trunks again before the ides of March were passed.

PART IV.

I.

I HAVE come now to a part of my story which I am unable to tell. I have tried to write briefly, and then tried to write at length the history of those first months at Rome. I can get no definite idea of them, I can get no clear aspect of them from any angle. I have tried to see them as Paul saw them, as Marcelle felt them, as George pondered on them in later years, as I went through them myself, and I cannot get any clearer. All that came afterwards was in the making then, but I don't know how it was done.

At first nothing could spoil the joy of being in Rome. I retain vivid impressions of certain hours of intense enjoyment at the beginning, but their setting is incoherent and confused in my memory. I remember one day, quite early in the time of our stay, when we three, Marcelle, George and I, went to the Vatican, and chose the sculpture for our morning's work. I forget where I left them—I think among the Roman Emperors—and I made my way alone to the Belvedere.

And there I set to work to understand the four great things enshrined there. Marcelle could not endure my slow rumination over art. She saw more than I did, but she saw it in a flash, and then soon wearied, after a few ecstatic moments. I only gradually saw, and then became slowly but absolutely intoxicated. What seemed horribly dull and school-girl-like to her, was to me the necessary process. I

had, with an effort, to escape from my material pre-occupations and distractions before the white glories of the Apollo could dazzle me. The marble god was spiritualised into the ideal of living beauty before I was conscious of every line of grace, of subtle strength, every god-like instinct of movement in spite of his eternal stillness. Then came the same with the Antinous, and just as he too had come to life for me, I bowed my head on my hands and felt horribly tired, horribly weary. I had strained to see the might of man's power, and I reeled back in my sense of kinship and of aloofness. I felt the masters of human art awaking capacities in myself, and then I felt the utter loneliness of my individuality.

Seeking a relief I moved quickly into the open court in the middle, and looked up at the blue sky, half-expecting to see the great dominating dome which was so near. It was not to be seen from the little court, but my mind peered through the masses of masonry down to the lamps round the tomb of the Apostles, and there was no reponse in my tired heart for the just demands made upon it there.

I crept, I remember, to the edge of the tinkling fountain, where with Italian carelessness there had been allowed to grow some wild ferns and some cushioned mosses. The relief of it caught my breath! I seemed to hear the little streams among the moors in the Peak country tinkling over the brown stones, and to see the mosses, just the same as this moss, with a miniature forest of golden grass against the green.

I don't know what weary home sickness, what tiredness of my whole nature craved for rest, and was rested on that bit of moss. Repose from art that strained me, and from things that were too great for me, seemed to be given out by it as its natural atmosphere.

I think perhaps the amount of great art was too intoxicating to a country-bred English girl. Ah me, the first visit to the gallery of the Villa Borghese! The Titian possessed me. I sat alone before it for an hour, while it ate

into me; then rising, as in a dream, I felt as if the glory and depth of colour were speaking to me in whispers not all holy. And still in its grip, I strolled out under the dark, grey, mysterious ilex trees, and sat down on a damp marble bench and thought of Raphael resting there in his short life so full of haste. The Renaissance possesses that piece of ground and must for ever possess it; an alluring, unholy romance is in it, a dark sense of mystery, a charm that might grow into the very thought of death, even of murder.

Then I remember another day when we first went to the Capitol, and through the Forum to the Mamertine prison, striving to gain some faint glimpse of the old, firm, antique Rome. Ancient Rome always seemed to petrify my imagination. The strongest impression I received was from the tombs; the curiously self-sufficient forms lying on their couches, so calm, so self-contained, even before the long journey into the unknown! These were the men on whom other men had depended for the very breath of life, for their loves and their souls; quite unheeded, with the appalling tyranny of indifference, by their world-weary masters. It was impossible not to fancy that some race of inferior beings must be still in subjection and attendance on their masters during that long voyage.

From the window that throws light on the "dying gladiator," away to the Coliseum, what a prospect for eye and for mind, even for an ignorant girl's mind! In those days we were allowed to believe that he was a dying gladiator, "butchered to make a Roman holiday," a glorious animal sacrificed to give a momentary thrill of excitement to the bored mistresses of the masters of the world. At present I understand that he is a Gaul dying for his country.

Then from the Capitol we went down into the Forum and made our way to the Mamertine prison. Criticism, twenty years ago, allowed us to think the dank, dark, square hole was once indeed a Roman prison where Peter and Paul were

bound. There my girl's fancy tried to realise those two men cast away under the ground, a threatening blot on the glory of the greatest and wisest of world powers. And most of all I tried to picture the small blear-eyed man, boasting of his foolishness, sore with self-inflicted wounds, blue with the weals of many a scourging, who gloried in his slavery to a crucified Master.

I grew altogether confused and troubled as the time wore on, and it was not as if there were none but such impressions as these in the exhausting process of seeing Rome for the first time. We had our trials from living human beings too, quite apart from what we were suffering in and with Paul.

A certain priest who was learned, polished, hard but yet attractive, came to see us and spent some time telling us all and more than all the stories against the Vatican that I heard during my whole stay in Rome. But while others told those same stories vaguely, and in a diluted form, this man told them in the most incisive, biting, polished language, with a seeming grip on facts that startled me. Looking back, I think they were chiefly accusations against the Roman officials of old-world diplomatic policy and untruths, also of the crushing of two or three individuals who had been too enlightened for their times. It was in fact a very small budget he gave us, but at the moment my faith seemed all damped, and my head ached. The man himself went back to his prayers and his daily Mass and his very friendly relations with the Vatican, and probably only remembered that he had eaten something that disagreed with him that Saturday. But to me it was more serious, and I think Marcelle took it all as absolutely true, for those who were accused were becoming Paul's enemies.

It was my day for confession, and I was determined I would not be put off by the talk I had listened to. I went to St. Peter's, just holding myself together ready to go to any confessor, and knelt down outside the confessional

marked for the English. I caught a glimpse of a heavy, ordinary face, and then I plunged in, and told him that I wasn't sure if I believed in anything. He asked me what had happened, and I repeated what I had heard in the morning: "What does it matter to you even if it is all true?" he said. "More than nine-tenths of what is said are lies, the place stinks with gossip; but supposing every word to be true, would you then be faithless because of their sins? You have got to get to heaven, and to get food for your soul, and you ought to be hungry enough not to be too nice as to whether the plates and dishes on which your food is given to you are ideal or not." The voice, though rough, was kindly, and I came out from the confessional braced and brightened, with a certain additional satisfaction in having got my brightness from the very heart of the official world, and within the walls of St. Peter's.

From that day I grew a little firmer, and I needed firmness, for darkness was closing in upon us. A sore bitterness of the heart lay in the materialising of our ideal, from the necessarily official red-tape business of Paul's case, and the slow gnawing of the long persistent silences, and the apparently puerile delays. Delay followed delay; there were moments when we broke down, and Marcelle became passionate, moments when our silence grew from a root of bitterness. There were times when we prayed as we had never prayed before, but all in the dark. I don't think any woman I know could give a coherent history of those days, and I cannot. So as the facts must be told, and I can't tell them, I will put in some letters which Father Duly has given me, written to him by Mr. Sutcliffe during our first months in Rome.

But I must not forget, before thus continuing the story of Paul, and through Paul, of us all, to mention one event of great interest only to myself. About the beginning of February I heard from my sister Mary that the eldest of the Darcombes had proposed to her, and been accepted. I was

startled at finding how much I felt the news, and that although it could not be a surprise it was a real shock. When I left England I had hoped for this. It seemed as if otherwise I should be going into my new life burdened with the thought of Mary's loneliness, with no one to live with her but Miss Mills. Now nothing ostensibly was altered, and yet I had a horrible sense of my own loneliness and a hankering after my mother, my home and my childhood. Also I had a haunting feeling that my own future would be what I had dreaded for Mary, a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Mills. I tried to sympathise with our dear old governess in her tremulous delight at Mary's engagement, and in her own acuteness in having foreseen it from the first. I struggled against my selfishness, and I think no one noticed my sadness but Mr. Sutcliffe. Marcelle was too deeply preoccupied. For a couple of days George Sutcliffe's eyes followed me about with mute sympathy and readiness to help—a help that in loyalty and truth I felt bound, if only to myself, to reject and avoid. I think perhaps he kept silent because there was an instinct growing upon us four that each must stand alone, and not depend upon the others in the troubles that were coming near.

Silence is the fortress of the strong, and there are times when men and women understand instinctively that they must be strong, if their lives are not to be overwhelmed in a great deep.

It seemed gradually, as time wore on, as if no one of us ventured on a talk alone with one of the other three, if he or she could avoid it. Even Marcelle and I liked to keep Miss Mills with us, and willingly endured her endless patter as to shrines and miracles, and the strangest relics and the most incoherent fulfilment of the most enigmatic prophecies.

II.

LOOKING over these few old letters, I see how the arrival in Rome was almost at once the parting of the ways, in their intellectual history, between George and Paul. It has been said that no one leaves Rome the same man as he goes there. Paul went there idealising all things according to a fashion of his own. George went there with a little British prejudice at the back of his mind; he half-shrank from an official, ecclesiastical world, although he had always defended it in theory. He desired to see with Paul's eyes, but he dreaded that he might not succeed. He came, he saw, and he was conquered. Not so much the seat of official rule, as the home of the Father of the Faithful, the City of Saints, the burial-field of martyrs, took hold of his heart and delighted his imagination. His view was fresher, simpler, more direct, more actual than that of the older man. Where Paul, with overwrought nerves, was quick to find fault, George was inclined to wistful reverence.

"It is all too big a concern for us to judge of it," he said once, and that annoyed Paul. It seemed to him so far too little.

Then, as George says, I think in one of these letters, Paul could not endure the political, constitutional aspects of the Church. With all his theories as to Church history he would have liked better that the Pope should resemble the head of the Methodists, or the Baptists, in simplicity, absence of pomp and accessibility. George, on the other hand,

claimed that a constitution, that pomp, dignity, ceremonial, were natural to mankind; that the Vatican was a slowly matured, natural growth, and thus resembled the British Constitution!

In slowness to change, in wide common-sense, in tolerant patience he saw a great resemblance between the British Constitution and the Court of Rome. "But it is rather," he admitted, "our Constitution as Burke loved it, than what we possess to-day with our extended franchise."

The temper of Mr. Sutcliffe's mind and the Count's had indeed been very different from the first. Perhaps it was the mental expansion which George underwent in Rome that made him more independent and developed his natural bias.

Here is the first letter written from Rome by Mr. Sutcliffe to Father Duly:—

"ROME,
"18th December, 18—

"DEAR FATHER DULY,

"I have been silent about what you call 'the great enterprise' because I really could not tell what the prospect was. But now I will give you a brief account of all that has passed, so far. In the first place, as you know d'Etranges had built immensely on Cardinal Mattei's sympathy and assurances, and when we arrived, and found not only that he was not in Rome, but that he had left Rome after the Count's letter had reached him, and before our arrival, the blow was a great one; for it seemed to most of us to mean not only that we should not have the assistance of his presence, but that he wanted to be clear of the whole business. However, d'Etranges, I need not say, did not allow himself to be discouraged, but went to his friend, the Rector of the French College. The Count asked him for an introduction to the Cardinal Secretary of the Holy Office, telling him that he had hoped to obtain it through Cardinal Mattei,

but that Cardinal Mattei was by ill-luck away. Monsignor Frumont knew nothing of our affairs, but asked if we wanted only an introduction to the Cardinal as an acquaintance, or if he wanted to see him on official business ; and on learning that it was the latter, said that he had better put the matter in writing, and that he would then see a Dominican friend of his, a Consultor of the Holy Office, and ascertain the best mode of procedure. He had no doubt, considering d'Etranges' position and his friendship with Cardinal Mattei, that the introduction could be obtained, but he thought this the wisest course. D'Etranges spent some days drawing up a very careful statement as to the objects of the *International*, and as to the *dubia* which had been sent to the Holy Office on the two questions of biblical inspiration and evolution. He has devoted a separate section to each of these subjects. He describes the state of opinion in the learned world in England and Germany, and the imperative necessity, if Catholic thought is to hold its own, that we should be free to discuss both subjects boldly. He also gives a careful summary of some of those generally acknowledged conclusions of biblical critics, which are inconsistent with the current theological phraseology on inspiration. Both his logic and his rhetoric in the first and more general part of his statement are in my opinion admirable. He points out that a '*negative*' in response to the *dubia* would make it necessary for our thinkers simply to close their portfolios. On the other hand a '*tolerari potest*' would leave the question open, would commit the Church to nothing, and would yet enable us to go on with our work. But when he defines the theological position he desires to see admitted, I think he is on wrong lines. I will try to tell you why, as it may clear up my own ideas. D'Etranges is too impatient, he pushes things too far. To say 'not inspired in matters of history' is to go too far, and to ignore theology and tradition. Had he said, not 'literally true,' his case would have been far

stronger. No one now believes (for example) in the literal truth of Joshua's account of the sun standing still, yet we do not say that the account is *not* inspired. Father Pianciani, a hundred years ago, told us that the account in Genesis of the seven days' creation meant seven visions of the writer, yet we don't say the account is *not* inspired. The account is inspired; though some passages are to be *interpreted* as allegories, and others as the mere record of things as they appeared to the science of pre-scientific days. The message is inspired, but it reaches us through the medium of men of the same nature as ourselves; the integrity of the message is guaranteed, *not* the infallibility of the human medium on matters extraneous to the message.

“Had Paul considered with respectful attention the recognised theological principles, apart from their usual limited application by matter-of-fact minds, he might have probably shown that those principles can now be seen to apply in the direction of liberty, where they have once not seemed so to apply—that there are other inspired narratives which are not to be interpreted as historically exact. He would, under the head of interpretation, though not of inspiration, have eventually gained all he wants. The human element always allowed to be compatible with inspiration could be recognised as existing in fresh instances. Instead, he hastily commits himself to an untheological mode of statement which is sure to be unacceptable. So too as to evolution. Darwinism pure and simple does seem inevitably to contradict the dogma of creation. It is understood in Rome as representing man, body and soul, simply as the outcome of already existing material forces. There is no difference in kind between man and brute. Had he used the word ‘evolution’ instead of Darwinism, and quoted St. Augustine's teaching or that of St. Thomas as to ‘*rationes seminales*’ he would have been on much stronger ground, but his French logic, in this case hasty and premature, has placed him in an untenable posi-

tion. His real meaning is right, and I believe will, thirty years hence, be accepted by theologians themselves. Truth is the daughter of time.

“ We must remember that the business of the authorities is to preserve revealed truth not to teach history or science. The Christian revelation has been developed and applied more or less accurately in the dogmatic theology which has gradually grown up under pressure of the controversies of ages. This theology is in possession. It is, as it were, the common law of the Church. Authority accepts and administers it. Where positive science shows it to be imperfect, to need some change, the man of science must urge his case in the field of debate. The individual theologians will, in deference to his criticisms, eventually correct it, and then, authority will regard the new theology—the amended law—as their rule. But they can no more, on their own responsibility, supersede the existing theology, than the magistrate or judge can give a ruling contrary to existing civil law. Let Parliament change the law if it is unsatisfactory, and then the ruling of the judge will change too. No doubt authority may act on the evidence of ‘probable’ theological opinions. Theological, like civil, law is susceptible of varying interpretations, but authority cannot set aside theology and supersede it. This is really our protection against absolutism. The power which Paul would confer on the rulers would be most dangerous. Theology is the outcome of thought in the Church which has been approved. Its authority is a recognition of the functions of thought in the ecclesiastical polity, and thus it protects our liberties while it also at times curtails them.

“ Another of Paul’s mistakes, which has led almost at once to the pangs of disenchantment, was the sharp distinction he always drew between the officials in England and those in Rome. In England all was petty, narrow and sectarian; among the Seven Hills he was to find freedom, breadth, great ideas. This is so far true, that personal and local jealousies are

absent in Rome, and one may find there greater impartiality. But a certain suspiciousness of genius and novelty characterises all officials. What soldier of genius is satisfied with the War Office? Yet red tape has its position, and a most important one, in the stability of the body politic. It may damp the genius, but it expels the quack. In Rome, moreover, there is above all the sacred trust, 'Guard the deposit'. Her very function is to hand down unchanged the revelation received from our fathers. She does so in the form in which the approved theologians have explained it. As long as that form exists in the schools, it will be protected by the Roman courts.

"Lastly, is it not strange that d'Etranges, with all his theories as to the supernatural being based on the natural, all his tendency to dwell on the natural elements in the Church, is intensely impatient with poor human nature in her officials, and also has a positive distaste for constitutional or political action of any kind on the part of ecclesiastics? They are all men, and, therefore not only, even in the very best specimens, liable to defect, but also, being part of human society, they must rule according to a constitution of some sort, or become tyrants. What he wants is a tyrant Pope who would be quite free to obey Paul d'Etranges!

"Marcelle and Miss Lisa are really enjoying Italian art and history, and I am glad they have the distraction. I feel myself, that whatever is to happen, it will be easier to bear it here than on any other spot on earth."

"5th January.

"A week has passed since the Count sent the paper in to Monsignor Frumont, and we have had a taste of Roman dilatoriness, for we met Frumont on the Pincio yesterday and found that he had not yet either read the paper or seen the Consultor. Of course he is a busy man, but this news does not improve the Count's temper. Did I tell you that

it is evidently considered as a great joke by Frumont and his friends that Cardinal Mattei should have posed as an authority on science at the Congress?"

"10th January.

"Frumont has at last called on us to-day, and was much more satisfactory in one sense, because he is much more awake to the importance of the matter. The Consultor has read the paper (I could not make out that Frumont had done so himself), and has said that the matter is certainly a serious one—so serious that he advises d'Etranges not to try and see the Cardinal. 'Surely,' said d'Etranges, 'the very reason why I *should* see the Cardinal.' 'No,' said Frumont, 'my Dominican friend's sympathies are entirely on your side. And he knows Rome well. He is inclined to think you had best simply leave it to him to do all he can for you. But if you are very anxious to see an official, he thinks he could arrange for you to see the Assessor, who presides at the meetings of the Consultors.' Paul was quite puzzled. 'Surely the Cardinal is the more influential and responsible.' 'Precisely,' said Frumont, 'therefore for you to see him might make it impossible for the Holy Office to drop the affair.' 'But I don't want it dropped,' said the Count. The French priest shrugged his shoulders. 'This is what my Dominican friend says,' he replied, 'and I think you can trust him.' The Count insisted that he must have the matter thoroughly sifted, and that if he could not see the Cardinal he must see the Assessor. And Frumont promised to repeat this decision to the Dominican.

"When he had left us d'Etranges was eloquent on the supineness of the average Roman in these matters. 'Red tape and etiquette are all in all to them, the interests of truth nothing,' he said. He deplores Mattei's absence—for he alone among us insists on believing it to be purely

accidental, and still has faith in the ultimate fulfilment of the promises made at the Swiss Congress. 'We must wake them up,' he said to me just now, 'by a little of the daylight of public opinion. I have promises from the *Monitore* at Milan and the *Soleil* in France to write when the moment is ripe, and I will communicate with them at once.' I feel so much in the dark as to the Roman procedure that I am for delaying any journalistic action (as I have told him), lest a false step should be made, but d'Etranges is quite decided.

"I think our ladies have been overdoing their sightseeing; they look very white and tired."

"8th March.

"Three months to-day since we left Venice.

"I have not had the patience to write before this. The delays have been endless. For a fortnight after the time at which I last wrote to you, we could not get any date fixed for the interview with the Assessor. Then two days before it *was* to have come off it was postponed. 'The Assessor had to go to Naples.' However, at last Paul has been to see him, exasperated at delay, but still refusing to attach to it significance of a discouraging kind. He has just come back furious, and could hardly speak. By degrees we have got bit by bit from him the following facts—first, that the Assessor did not see him at all, but only the Dominican Consultor; secondly, that the Consultor strongly advised d'Etranges simply to go back to England as his only chance of avoiding a condemnation; thirdly, that when Paul had indignantly threatened to state publicly that he had been refused an audience with the Cardinal, the Consultor said strongly that it was not refused, that he could obtain it for him at once; but that he thought it would be fatal to his cause, and urged him not to ask for it. The Count, however, declared that he should persist in asking for it.

"I feel more and more bewildered and uneasy, I am now

resolved to get what light I can on the situation for myself. I cannot trust Paul's judgment while he is in this state of irritation. I shall ask for an interview with the Dominican Consultor and let you know what I can make out. I am afraid it will not be easy to find a common measure between my British, and his Italian, French. I begin to wish that Marcelle, and Paul's *fiancée* had stayed at home. They say very little, but I chanced to cross before them in the Oratory this morning and I had a painful impression of the strain they are living in, judging from the expression on their faces. I seemed to read in their eyes 'But then, to whom, Lord, shall we go? I wish you or somebody who could be of use to them could come here. I am obliged to remember when I talk to them that one is Paul's sister and the other his promised wife! The latter fact I find it extremely difficult to remember; their whole relation is so curiously inhuman, and I think it has for the moment slipped almost entirely out of his consciousness, amidst his anxieties. He is certainly not fashioned for practical life, and it is strange that while his intellect is singularly clear, strong and unbiased in purely intellectual matters, it can be passionately unreasonable in dealing with men and things which resist him.'

This is the last of the letters that Father Duly has been able to find, and for the rest I must tell what I can from my own recollections. These become plainer, and the mist which hangs over the first months of uncertainty seems to rise as I recall the later and more acute stage of Paul's affairs in Rome.

III.

ONE afternoon, early in March, there was a small party gathered in Marcelle's sitting-room, the largest private one in the hotel. I do not care to describe the society that had gathered round the d'Etranges during the winter. The afternoon of which I speak was an unusually bad specimen. There were not many people of any distinction, and of those present I can recall only one or two malcontents of the ecclesiastical world, some would-be intellectuals of all sorts, and a sprinkling of almost professional flatterers.

George having brought me a second cup of tea from the much-surrounded but rather silent Marcelle, muttered, "What a crew!" under his breath, and then, "Come and look at the view".

I smiled and went to the window. There was nothing to see in the little courtyard far below us but an old manservant talking to an older woman with a yellow handkerchief on her head, as she was applying some violent process for the washing of linen. We looked out in silence.

"And yet," said George abruptly, "when all is said, Is not Rome simply full of Paul?"

"Yes," I answered, in a low voice. "It is strange that you should say so to-day. This morning it came over me in a sudden wave of meaning. I was enjoying the sense of human history somehow in a particular way, and as I went to kiss the foot of St. Peter's statue and press my forehead on it, I felt a catch at my throat, and I seemed to hear Paul

say, 'She gathered up the traditions of the nations, she did not come to destroy but to fulfil, she purified their customs with fire, baptised their idols in the blood of her martyrs, and loved to build her churches on the foundations of their temples.'" George was only half-listening, he roused himself.

"Yes," he said sadly, "we shall always be Paulists whatever——" he stopped. "No," he went on, more vigorously; "the cloud will pass—I am not really afraid, he will still be a Paulist himself." Then after a moment: "Do you think, Lisa, that without him I should ever have conceived of Rome as simply filled with the Saints? These daily festas, each church in turn praising her own patron, make one realise to an almost overwhelming degree how the Saints are alive. They jostle us in the streets, and they are praying in every church, and by every shrine."

"Oh, don't I know!" I exclaimed, delighted at the thought that answered to my own so exactly. "I used to feel teased by people who loved relics, and worried by trivial anecdotes of the Saints. But Paul has made the Saints so intensely alive to me, that I rather enjoy such talk when it is not silly, as one rather likes aimless gossip about the great men one has known."

"'The Communion of Saints,'" said George, imitating Paul's tones. "It is not good for man to be alone," any then in his own voice he went on: "And yet, Lisa, was any man ever so completely alone? I have felt it all along as a mark of tragedy written on him; but now that he listens to these people grumbling, gossiping, belittling all things in heaven and earth, his isolation seems intolerable! Look at them now, twittering and humbugging."

"Don't exaggerate," I said smiling, and then following his glance across the room I saw Marcelle looking at us. Her eyes were sad; as they met mine, she hastily turned to a young man near her.

I started. "It is a shame to leave her like this," I said, and moved out of the window.

"I shall make my escape," said George, in a low voice.

I noticed a moment later that he had left a book on the window-sill, and when the long penance of our little tea-party was over, I had the curiosity to take it up. I had seen how intently he had read it earlier in the afternoon. It opened at a page deeply scored in pencil, and the passage marked was this :—

To him (Lacordaire) then Rome became a means of deliverance. He was deeply impressed by the awful grandeur, the venerable majesty of the Eternal City. Before this all else seemed to fade away, the Avenir, liberty, Lammenais himself, became as nothing in comparison.

"Lisa, what are you reading? What makes you look like that?" Marcelle's voice had a sharp ring in it. "Did George leave it for you? What is it?"

"No, I think he forgot it. It is the life of Lammenais."

"Oh, I hate that book! How could he read it! How could he leave it here!" She snatched the book out of my hand, and as she read the marked passage, she flushed deeply. "I was waiting for that," she said angrily. "As a race, you cannot understand fidelity, devotion. Your cold minds hold the balance evenly between love and hatred, truth and lies. Lacordaire forced himself to idealise the ecclesiastical tyranny of his moment, but it is easy for you English. Yes, take the conventional, easy way, and despise us and our friends. I understood you both just now standing in your window. Pass by with the priest and the deacon. These second-rate people you both despise have more of the Samaritan——"

I was startled and frightened by her sudden vehemence. I was as cowardly before a woman's anger as any man, and I am sure I looked the terror I felt. She threw the book on

the table and walked up and down the room. This anger did not make her ugly and small as anger makes most people, it was like a white flame that had taken possession of her, and it lit up her features and gave vitality to her whole bearing. She was beautiful though far from attractive at that moment. Presently I heard her mutter :—

“ I have tried to control myself. I am doing wrong, I am doing harm. Ah, how can they——” Her back was turned towards me. I am ashamed to say it, but I tried to get out of the room before she could turn again and see me.

“ But anyhow, it isn’t her fault, poor little Lisa, she can’t, she doesn’t mean it.”

I had not opened the door, when her strong white hands were on my shoulders, and her eyes gazed into mine, as if to tear something out of me.

“ You can’t help it,” she said, “ can you ? ”

There seemed a struggle I could not understand, and then another spirit shone in her face. She kissed me gently. “ *Pax tecum.* Oh, say *Pax tecum*, Lisa, and say it very nicely, as if you were the sub-deacon.”

I crawled upstairs to our own apartment, and pretending not to hear Miss Mills call me, I sank on to the chair by my bedside, and rested my head on the pillow.

What did Marcelle mean ? And whatever she meant, was it the flare-up of a moment, or was it what had been hidden under her growing silence and reserve ? I felt that internal dissensions between us four would make the situation absolutely unbearable. And yet, was it not true that there was a division already growing between Paul and George ? It was useless to pretend that they thought alike on the situation. But it was in reality because George took a reasonable view of the position of the authorities that he could be useful to Paul. It did not mean, as I knew well, that he had lost his personal devotion to Paul. Marcelle was

grossly exaggerating the importance of that marked passage in the life of Lammenais. Hitherto, there had been a tacit understanding between us three, that our aim and object was the same; to carry Paul safely, if possible triumphantly, through these weeks in Rome. But if Marcelle expected George to be nothing but a blind disciple to the bitter end, then our union was broken up, and George must inevitably fall out of the circle. I was in despair. During the reserve and silence that had grown up between us, we two girls had been moving in different directions indeed. I realised now how entirely I had trusted to George to pull us through, and had imputed the same trust to Marcelle. I am sure I had not lost my admiration, rather it had grown in Rome, for Paul's genius, but I don't think I ever now expected him to act quite wisely. He seemed to me as helpless in action as he was wonderful in thought, and a maternal yearning to help his weakness was gradually replacing my fear of him. I had thought him a leader of men. He was a leader of men, if to rouse, to enlighten and to stimulate the intellectual is to be a leader. But he did not know how to deal with men of temperaments and minds unlike his own. Even now he was mismanaging George from the point of view of a leader. He had not patience for the comradeship that is necessary for any leader. But here Marcelle ought to have been the link between them, and until this evening she had been so, at least as far as I could judge. I felt sick and hopeless. I went over in my mind imaginary conversations between Marcelle and myself in which I implored her to keep George with us, and not to lose his support for Paul. But I had found already that it did not answer for me to speak to her about George, and what more natural than to wish to manage her affairs in her own way? Then I imagined a talk with George in which I begged him to be patient, to pull through at any cost, that we might save Paul from disaster. But I could not do it even in imagination without

a painful remembrance of that horrid temptation against my loyalty to Marcelle and to Paul, at the time of my mother's death. That temptation was buried fathoms deep, and yet somehow the skeleton had rattled just a little bit to-day, and I felt that I must leave George and Marcelle to themselves. I was not the person to interfere. To my mind it was wonderfully strange that four people, all meaning well, all loyal and straight, should have got into the muddle we had got into. Knowing life from twenty years more of it, I think it not less but more sad, just because I know how common, how usual it is! If loyal minds never misunderstood, if tender hearts were never unkind to those they love the best, if imagination only lighted the ideal of our friends, and did not at moments grossly magnify their failings, if explanations were of any use, or silence could heal or reconciliations make the past live again, how many would rest satisfied with earth, who now raise tear-dimmed eyes to heaven?

All my worst fears were confirmed by Marcelle's manner to George next day. She was very disagreeable. It seems a trivial word to use about what was in reality tragic. I longed to be the sort of tactful, wise woman I had heard and read of, who would be sure to know how to make Marcelle see the enormous mischief she was doing, and make George understand that it was only a passing cloud, a fit of intolerable nervous agitation from which she was suffering. But the woman of omnipotent tact is rarer even than the fairy godmother, and I had but a small allowance of tact even compared to most women. Besides, my own nerves were not at their best. I remember I quite shook with alarm, and received a glance of friendly inquiry from George two days afterwards, when I found him and Paul in close discussion late in the evening.

Marcelle, still frigid, very upright, "very haughty," as

Miss Mills would have said, and ostentatiously absorbed in her knitting, sat apart.

"I know that the way it is done appears to us intolerable," said George Sutcliffe, "but I don't agree as to the tyranny."

Paul was leaning back, his head resting on the top bar of his chair; there was an intensity of contempt in his smile, and he seemed to avoid meeting George's eye from the instinct of politeness.

"I think it is necessary for the liberty of the many that authority should be slow to act."

"I own," said Paul, "that I don't follow your meaning."

"I think they leave the Church much more free by their silence. Our mistake has been that we have come here to talk about what they don't want to talk about. We want to make them take a part, and if they decide straight off in our favour, they are committed to a defence of our opinions which is tyrannical to those who disagree with us."

"How about the '*tolerari potest*'?" Paul's voice was one of hopeless patience towards an irrational child.

"It is exactly the same thing now for the courts in Rome to say publicly that our views are *tolerated*, as to say that they are *approved*."

"And, therefore, conversely," said Paul, the irony of his smile becoming more obvious, "the fact that the most intolerable nonsense is *tolerated* in the average textbooks, and from the average theologian, shows that that is *approved*."

"No," said George. "It is quite different. To be slow to cut away the old is quite different from being ready at once to welcome the new. Authority finds the old growths established, it is asked to plant the new. The Church is not intended to supplant the natural action of the human mind, and the less authority interferes with the clash of new and old, the more it seems to me to be in its proper place. It has not been sent to teach us science or historical criticism, and if it adopted the opinions of the first thinkers of each

successive age, it would leave its children at the mercy of every intellectual fashion that passes by."

"Whereas now they are left at the mercy of the opinions of theologians whose science is hundreds of years old, and not believing such obvious absurdities they end in believing in nothing at all."

"I think there are very few indeed in such a position," said George, "and the Church must legislate for the majority. There are very few indeed who are not capable of discriminating between the opinions of the schoolmen and the infallible decisions of the Church, or who cannot consult those who are capable of doing so. There are very few who are not capable of understanding how much is left open by the Church, who cannot be told to possess their souls in patience until the new wine is mellowed and the new cloth has been stretched, so that we may fill and we may patch without bursting and without strain."

Paul sat up. "And so," he said, in a tone at once sad and stern, "our conception of the Church is very different. I look to her not merely as a timekeeper, an umpire of the thinkers and teachers of mark. I have looked to her as our teacher and our guide, as a city set upon a hill, where knowledge and understanding should be luminous for the blind, where the first thinkers and teachers should find blessing and encouragement, and their labours be guided, while their authority was doubled. I have dreamed"—he was gazing in front of him as he spoke, and I knew well the look in his eyes as he conjured up the vision of his life—"I have dreamed while I found men lost in darkness, in gross sins, in horrible ignorance, that there was one centre of true intellectual light. When times were darkest and I could see nothing but the world, the flesh and the devil in my own troubled youth, I conceived of the Church as the barque of safety, as Christ walking upon the waters, always as light and giving light, peace and giving peace. Our conceptions

are indeed different. To you the Church is the spectator, the policeman, giving toleration to old blind prejudice, indifferent to the gross ignorance and darkness of the multitude, only afraid of thought, believing nothing, teaching nothing——”

“I never said that,” interrupted George. He spoke quietly and with no apparent need of self-control. It was not an attitude that would attract the sympathy, only the wonder, of a Frenchman or Frenchwoman. “I think she has so much to teach that her whole time is not enough for it, and her priests, if they were angels and not men, insufficient for her task.”

“Yes,” said Paul bitterly. “If she has to keep the minds of men chained and their hearts submissive to old fables and prejudices, she has need of angels, but I think they should be the angels who once fell from heaven.”

“The Church does not teach ‘old fables and prejudices,’ though I know she does seem to leave the tares with the wheat, and it may be necessary——”

“But,” interrupted Paul, “if she is neither occupied in supporting the accretions of the theologians, or the progress of truth and light among the thinkers, what is she teaching, and to whom?”

“To all who listen,” said George, and the colour rose a little in his face, “she teaches Jesus Christ and Him Crucified.”

I know as I write them down that those words may jar, but they did not jar on any of us three at the moment. We four had always been free in our speech together; and while I don’t think our freedom was ever irreverent, it precluded any possibility of the idea that we wished to preach out of season. We said to each other a thing when we meant it, not otherwise.

“Yes,” George continued, “all her intellectual work has had this one object—to preserve the spirit and teaching of

Christ intact. Even superstitions which do not clash with this her mission she may treat leniently. The knowledge she guards and teaches is the highest, but it is not all the sciences."

"I thought so," said Paul, after a moment's pause. "*Je m'y attendais*, that is your way of avoiding disappointment, you make the best of things. It is natural, and I wish I could ever hope to do the same, but I cannot." He seemed to be speaking to himself.

"Do try to believe," said George quietly, "when I say it, that it is not disappointment—I came here dreading to be disappointed, but whereas if I had known beforehand all our worries, all the way you, and consequently we all, were to be tried in detail, I should have thought it quite intolerable, yet I am not disappointed. The Church here seems to me far more like the early Church than I expected it to be. It is the absolutely living centre of spiritual life, of heroic devotion, throughout the world, to the souls of men. I do not say that I am in love with all the officials; I am not. But I do think that the width and the wisdom and the sense of spiritual values here are enormous. I know that there is a danger in being more keen about two additional missionaries to the Indians, than the founding of a chair of philosophy; but I think that St. Paul would have been in the same danger. In spite of all their aggravating courtly ways, of their childish insistence on externals, and in spite of some unworthy little men among the nobler ones, and of great racial differences from myself, I do feel here that the whole is far greater than all its parts, and that I endure the human *thât* I see, because it so thinly disguises the Divine. But, *d'Etranges*, don't think me quite a fool, if I go further still. I don't think only that there would be a danger of tyranny and of upsetting the spiritual life of the many, if they always adopted the guidance of the intellectual men of the moment, but I think it is actually in the interests of thought in the long run that they

should act as a drag upon progress. Mind, I think they don't understand this themselves, they are not as wise as their own actions; but it is in the very nature of things that the men of action should be a drag on the men of thought. You are not more alien to the government of the Vatican than you would be to that of the House of Commons. The nation in the world which has been the quickest to put theories into practice is France, and we do not all think that she has been the happiest and the wisest. I think this difference in pace is in the nature of things, because the men of action have a true instinct that mankind to decide truly must decide slowly, and I believe that those men of thought who are before their time must of necessity suffer, and suffer very much."

He got up hastily, as if his last words had betrayed too much emotion—too intrusive a personal sympathy for Paul. If they had, he need not have been afraid of Paul perceiving it. Marcelle had risen and gone to the window apparently to count her stitches.

"I think," said Paul, "that you and I are inclining to different paths, because we are engaged in a business of which we expect very different issues. You think that all these childish delays and worries, these petty irritations, mean a great deal more than I think they do. They are unworthy, insufferable, but I attach very little importance to the whole thing. I hardly like to dignify the conduct of this *canaille* of officialdom, as Miss Mills would in my place, by supposing that they are the agents of the devil, in opposing the triumph of truth and light. Sutcliffe, if you had more confidence in our cause, my dear fellow, you would not be using your active mind in trying to justify what is not going to happen. It's really all right; don't be alarmed."

His tone was most friendly, and with hardly a touch of contempt, but I saw that George was for the first time really irritated. He was silent for quite a minute, then he glanced quickly from the brother to the sister, as if a new thought

had struck him. Lastly he looked at me as if he expected me to understand.

"Well," he said simply to Paul, "I can't agree; but happily I am not infallible as to my theories, or my view of what will happen; but I won't allow that my theories were made to fit the occasion or will depend on the issue."

"*Attendons,*" said Paul.

"Meanwhile, I suppose we may go to bed," said Marcelle, speaking for the first time, since I had come into the room.

IV.

WE were driving out on the Appian Way, two days later, bound for the catacomb of St. Calixtus, when the vetturino stopped. The Monsignore, who had undertaken to show us the catacomb, and who was in the first carriage with Paul and George, jumped out and came back to us.

"Get down," he said. He looked excited. "This," he went on in his incisive voice, as we stood in a silent group around him, "is the spot, pointed out by legend and history, for the vision to St. Peter. Here we are all asked, as we leave Rome the question which he dared to address to that heavenly vision, 'Quo Vadis?'"

We were quite silent. The famous Monsignore's well-known scepticism in matters of history made this moment the more impressive. I thought he was looking at Paul as he spoke. A melancholy smile was on Paul's lips as he stood uncovered. A few moments passed, and then the Monsignore told us to get into our carriages again.

Marcelle and I did not speak for some moments as we drove on through the mysterious Campagna. The melancholy charm suited us; there were dark clouds casting darkest shadows, and wondrous revelations of light between them, that quivered over the thin, ascetic vegetation and wavering reed growths. The whole we knew to be honey-combed with tombs. There seemed to be nothing else in the great plain but the dome of St. Peter's.

At last, as we drove on, a hand was slipped into mine.

"Lisa, I am afraid I am sometimes unkind, I am sorry," Marcelle said. I turned and kissed her. "What is there in me, *chérie*, that makes me turn on my best friends when I am in pain? Lisa, did he look as if he could answer that 'Quo Vadis?'"

It was dark and cold, and our poor candles fluttered and flared weakly on the rough brickwork and the damp earthen walls in the catacomb of St. Calixtus. All was dark and narrow and squalid, with none of the weird majesty of a natural cavern. These then were the holes in which the rats of Christians had taken refuge. Yet here had been led the keenest of spiritual lives, here had been quickened the seed of the tree that was to cover the whole earth.

I was glad that we had not been there before, although I had been impatient of delay. I knew now the main features of Rome, and could contrast frescoed domes and mosaic, encrusted apses and marble floors and porphyry columns with the dens in which had worshipped those of whom the world was not worthy. Here Christian scholars, like our guide the learned Monsignore, spend half their time in trying to read the broken sentences on tombs, and to reconstruct the worship and the customs of our spiritual forefathers. I don't know what the others felt; I forgot them. I followed mechanically down, and along, and down, and up again, drawing my cloak more closely round my chest. Twice we turned into little tiny square rooms in the earth, where rough frescoes in thin pure colouring pictured Christ as the Good Shepherd, or as Orpheus taming human nature with the harmonies of heaven. Mysterious symbolism! for us an enigmatic but significant language, used perhaps as a means of concealment from the persecutor, but full of a deeper meaning, a deeper connection in the history of mankind and of His Church, who came not to destroy but to fulfil the higher thoughts of men. But at what a sacrifice! All round us

were stones carved with the outline of a palm branch, which marked the graves of the torn and mutilated bodies of old and young, women and children, who had suffered all the tortures invented by men, and the tortures of their allies, the wild beasts.

I believe that the latest calculation as to the extent of the galleries of the catacombs hitherto discovered puts the subterranean city at 527 miles. When I was a girl it was supposed to be much larger. Its "slumbering inhabitants" were roughly guessed by Father Marchi at six millions. It had been a strange world underneath the earth, in which there had been an aristocracy as well as a priesthood: an aristocracy in which to die the death of a criminal was to take the highest rank! Even a Pope tells us in one inscription how he shrank from being buried too near the martyrs:—

Here I, Damasus, wished to have laid my limbs,
But feared to disturb the ashes of the Saints.

Here was the philosophy of the Cross literally carried out; here life must have been of trifling importance and the impatience for heaven a nostalgia that filled the hearts and the minds of men! Yet there is a gracefulness and tenderness in the inscriptions that precludes the idea of fanaticism. They were no Puritans calling down the vengeance of the God of armies; all that is left to us breathes a triumphant, serene peace.

"Sweetest, dearest Antonia, may God refresh thee in peace."

"May God, Christ the Almighty, refresh thy spirit."

"Eternal light shine upon thee, Timothea, in Christ."

"Sabbatius, sweet soul, pray and entreat for thy brethren and comrades."

"Atticus, thy spirit is in bliss, pray for thy parents."

"Anatolinus, may thy spirit rest well in God, and do thou pray for thy sister."

“Pray for us because we know that thou art in Christ.”

Only the day before I had been shown a pagan tomb of the same period, and still before my eyes was its message to the dead in one terribly simple phrase ;—

“In æternum vale.”

Gradually, in the awestruck absorption of attention, I knew that what I chiefly felt in that catacomb was overwhelming shame. All the littleness and selfishness of myself sickened me—not only the impossibility of imagining a condition of mind in which I could long for martyrdom, but the whole of my mental state, the small part of my mind given to what absorbed these people, the coarseness and lowness of even my ideal moments compared to their ordinary thoughts. I turned at a sharp corner to look back up the steep, narrow passage we had just come down, and I saw Marcelle a few steps behind me. She had her light held above her head, as if she had been trying to read something on the wall. I nearly called to her to take care how she walked, and then stopped. There was something in her attitude that showed her to be completely absorbed. There was always a marked simplicity and freedom in her way of standing and moving. She had nothing on her head, her black sleeve had fallen back to the elbow and her white arm gleamed as she held up the light. In the darkness the simple gown in ample folds might have been of any date. She came walking down towards me, quite unconscious of my being there. There was a peace on her face that shone from her eyes, and her white forehead and her cheeks were bright with unusual colour. Surely this was a Roman Christian maiden, the sister or the daughter of a martyr, come to bury her dead, quiet, absorbed, exalted, desiring only to consummate her own sacrifice.

“Are you coming?” It was Mr. Sutcliffe, who had turned back to tell us that the Monsignore and Paul were waiting. I turned to see if he saw Marcelle as I saw her, just

as we used to turn to each other sometimes at Peak Hall when we thought her beautiful. But this time he did not seem to see or to understand.

Ten minutes later we came out of the darkness into the fullest, richest evening light I have ever seen and felt. Out of the depths of the earth to the light of the sunset hour over the Campagna.

And we came up in the midst of the monks' little garden, full of colour. I had hardly noticed it as we went down, but vistas of white iris and purple iris in clumps and lines to the right and left, now almost blinded me, and the air was full of their scent. It seemed as if the blood of the martyrs had thus blossomed gloriously.

The change from the dank smell, the ugliness and utter poverty below, to the light above was in itself wonderful; but then we moved on a few steps, and we looked down through a long avenue of alternate cypress and young pines, which seemed to the eye to go straight on without a break from the garden where we stood all the way to St. Peter's. It looked like one shaded pathway from the catacomb to the basilica. The dome closed the view, golden in the evening light. There was the tree that had grown from the seed sown in the catacombs below. Had it not become the greatest of all trees?

I turned to Paul for sympathy, but the look in the stern face kept me silent. I knew instinctively that in his mind was a bitter contrast between the Pontiffs of the catacombs and even the prisoner Pontiff of the Vatican. It was a superficial, external contrast, unworthy of Paul's larger views of history, but the iron had by then entered into his soul.

We stood in silence, and I did not for several minutes realise that Marcelle and George had left us. "Where are they?" asked Paul presently.

"I will look," I said, and then was sorry I had said it.

I turned back towards the little garden, like a child's garden, near the opening into the catacomb. I looked down at the marigolds and the snapdragons, and the scarlet salvia which would not flower in our northern gardens before June, and wondered if the monks who worked there loved them very much, and then, looking round, I saw, down a narrow little path on my right, bordered with glorious iris, that George and Marcelle were talking very earnestly. I shrank back, and went to Paul, and was glad to find him and the Monsignore discussing a recent discovery in another catacomb. I thought Paul was showing more interest in general topics than he had shown for some little time, but he suddenly stopped abruptly, and, looking round at me as if he were tired out and I ought to know it, he said a little fretfully :—

“What is Marcelle doing? I must find her.”

“No, no, let me go,” I answered quickly, and I turned most unwillingly towards the flowers. I saw that they had moved farther off, and their backs were towards me. Then they stopped in their slow movement, and stood face to face.

Marcelle put out both hands, and took his. They stood thus for a moment, and then walked back, the flowers in lines, white on one side of them, purple on the other. All about them was full of light and glow and perfume. And I prayed that their lives might be thus. George's head was bent, hers was erect, as it had been down in the catacomb. I never, out of Fra Angelico's pictures, have seen two figures who conveyed, to me at least, such a sense of peace. “*Pax Tecum.*” Was it fancy, or had those words come very faintly to me in the stillness?

V.

GEORGE SUTCLIFFE had told Father Duly, in a letter written early in March, that he could not satisfy himself with the Count's report of his interview with the Dominican Consulor of the Holy Office, and that he must manage to see the latter himself. Whether after writing he still hesitated to take independent action, unknown to Paul, or whether he suffered only from the usual slowness of Roman officials in making appointments, I do not know, but I am sure that he did not see the Dominican till the end of April. I remember the day on which he did so very well.

In the morning he told Marcelle and me that he was to have the interview in the afternoon, and that he would come to the Minerva Hotel afterwards, to tell us what he had been able to make out.

Although he was not in the least less sardonic and bitter as to the way in which he was being kept waiting, I had a notion that Paul had not himself taken any special means for hurrying matters during the past five or six weeks. I think he wished to gain a little time, in order to get the support of the press in France, and to some extent in Germany and Italy. As we were very soon to know, it was exactly the journalistic support, on which he had always counted so much, that proved his worst enemy at the Vatican.

Anyhow, the lull in our affairs was broken on the day on which George first saw the Dominican, which is probably why the details of what passed are so fresh in my mind.

We did not see Mr. Sutcliffe after *déjeuner*, and we stayed in the hotel until about an hour before the time at which we expected him. Then leaving word at the Bureau, as to where we should be, we went across to Santa Maria Sopra Minerva. We had grown very fond of the church, of its Gothic gloom, of its shrine of St. Catherine of Siena, of its marble tomb of Fra Angelico, where Marcelle used to offer quaint and earnest prayers to the angelic painter for the conversion of the crowd of French artists (so called) who were covering her native land with their terrible, modern *objets de piété*.

After a few moments' prayer, I sat down on a creaky and uncertain chair in the right transept, and looked almost envyingly at a fine old tomb high on the wall on my right. There lay a bishop in the deeper gloom, sunk into the wall, and two angels, watching, held back the marble draperies that shaded his eternal rest—high up, put away on a shelf, with such depths of stillness, of security, of peace. Troubled times had passed for the crowd that so constantly fills the old church Sopra Minerva while he lay there "secure of change". Indeed, was there ever a day that a soul in trouble did not come to bring its conflict very near to his rest? He had not been a Saint, or lights would have shone before the tomb and many voices have spoken to him. He was not a looker on; his peace was too deep. An intense envy of the unknown bishop in the austere beauty of the early tomb and a consequent pity for myself and for Marcelle had hold of me.

In the Blessed Sacrament chapel Marcelle was bent in prayer, and there was something stormy and troubled in her outline. She had been very silent all day, and on entering the church she had passed hastily before me, brushing against the old beggar who was holding aside the heavy leather curtain, and walking at once to the altar, far up the church. She did not move for some time after that, but as

I said just now, her outline, to one who knew her as I did, was a troubled one.

In my envy of the bishop in the tomb, I began questioning him in a mental whisper, for I did not wish to rouse him, how far he had suffered as we suffered now, before he entered into that rest. Would he have understood in the least, the rebellious, shrinking pain with which Marcelle watched the conflict with the authorities? "They don't care to help him, to save him!" she had cried to me one night. "They go out to preach to the heathen, to make some silly beggar woman go to confession, and they trample on a great soul and a great heart. What do they care about his pain, about the spoiling of his life? And if he submits to them, and when they have put him back into the ranks of little nobodies, they will say supercilious things about the edification he has given by his obedience."

No, that fourteenth century bishop would not have pitied her in the least. Into his very soul, into the marrow of his bones, had entered the spirit of authority, of rule. But there had been one who must often have seen that tomb, who would have felt for Paul's sister, and would not, I think, have passed that kneeling figure in the narrow little chapel without divining something of her pain. He would have noticed her as well as the old woman of indescribably ragged garments kneeling on one side of her and two little girls on the other, sharing an apron as a veil over their two heads, probably, in spite of their sunny brown faces, asking that a little more rice and a little more oil might be attainable. They were very thin, poor little dears.

St. Philip Neri, I think, would have paused as he passed by, and have smiled at the children, but the infection of his peace would have also rested on Marcelle. It was for the love of him, and of one especial recollection of him, that Marcelle so loved the Dominican Church on the Minerva. For it was here, whether in the church itself or in a chapel

in the adjoining convent, that St. Philip had prayed many hours, day and night, that the cardinals and the theologians, and, it was feared, an already prejudiced Pope, might not condemn the writings of Savonarola. Day and night had the Dominicans watched in prayer, while the cause proceeded, and to them had joined himself their neighbour from San Girolamo, a few streets off. They had not had to wait for news of the decision to be brought to them, for while they prayed, St. Philip's face lit up with heavenly light, and he told them that the cause was won, and the fair fame of his fellow-Florentine secure. In our first days in Rome Marcelle and I had said to each other that we would often pray to St. Philip on the same spot to do the same for us. But now we did not talk much of what pressed on us most closely, and for myself I was dull in mind and heart, as I sat idly envying the wonderful peace of the bishop's tomb. The old, who do the resting, cannot understand how the untried can want to rest so soon; the middle-aged hardly own to themselves how much all need rest, for fear of losing courage; but the young have their crude, sharp sighs for it, just because they have not yet learnt to do without it.

I was wandering thus in thought when Marcelle touched my arm. I rose and followed her down the church.

"Don't let us go yet," she said, passing before the open iron gate into a side chapel. "Let us sit here a little while, Lisa." There was nothing remarkable in the chapel, but in a corner some popular devotion had grown up round a dim old picture, and paper flowers and lighted candles attested the same.

"They will be shutting the church," I said.

"Well, let us stay till we are turned out," answered Marcelle. "I want to talk to you," and then she became quite silent.

"But George may have come back by now, and be waiting for us," I said.

"Hardly yet," said Marcelle, "and he can wait a few moments, if he has. Paul will not be back till seven."

"But let us come and hear what the Dominican Consultor said."

"No hurry for that," said Marcelle, a little bitterly.

She was leaning forward on her chair, her face buried in her hands.

We had spoken in a low voice, not only because we were in the church, but because we had been speaking thus for some days, as if we were watchers in some sick chamber. We had too the manner towards each other of those who are absorbed in the struggle with a dangerous illness; the unity, the vigilance, the sense of doing all things possible, and of hideous impotence at the best. It is the unknown quantity in every illness, the secret arrow in the hand of the mighty, the new and unforeseen complication, according to the doctor, that haunts the watcher. It was the unknown quantity in Paul, the moral action on which all must depend at the crisis, that we watched for. We could not understand him, how should we? We suffered in his sufferings with an agony of sympathy, but we felt as pigmies before a giant when we tried to understand him.

What hurt Marcelle so frightfully was that it was his soul she loved and craved to save, and that just those who ought, by their position and their priesthood to have been with her, who ought to have been the gentlest of physicians, were those who seemed to her to be trying him the hardest. To me, although I shared George's view of the reticence of the officials, the long wait was an indescribable wretchedness; my moods alternating almost momentarily between lack of faith and an agony of intercession. With Marcelle's stronger, more complete nature, there must have been awful tempests. What frightened me was her growing silence.

Presently I got up and said, "Come," firmly, and she rose and followed me.

Outside the church we met George turning away from the hotel where he had been to find us. We joined him, and walked a few steps in silence across the piazza.

At last I said, "Well?" and George answered hurriedly, "I must talk to you at once, but not in these streets and not in the hotel; the Pantheon will be empty, come in there".

It was only a step, and we made our way into the building that in all its pagan glory is now so strangely incongruous with its Christian emblems and its empty tabernacle; boasting an Italian patriotism unknown to ancient Rome, and professing a Catholicism in despite of the Vatican. To me the greatness of its lines and the glory of sky revealed in its midst were half-consciously soothing.

There were only one or two chairs to be seen, and George fetched them for us, while Marcelle looked gloomily indifferent and sat down on a marble step.

"I have had a long talk with the Dominican," he said. "He is very able, very wide, and as Frumont said, he is quite sympathetic to our aims." Marcelle gave a little shrug. "But he says that Paul's idea is quite impracticable; things are not ripe for it. 'Let him come back in twenty years,' he said, 'when we old men are dead, and those who have grown up amidst these controversies will be in power then. We are not ready for him now, and mind you, he is not ready *now*. His ideas are great, some of them true, but not so winnowed from what is not true that they can be separated as yet. Wait to let them pass through the contradictions of time, wait till he can bring us true bread, not a mixture of grain and husks, before we allow the little ones to feed on it.' He went on to say that the *dubia*, if answered at all in their present form, must be answered in the negative. As I have told you before, the Holy Office would simply refer the chief points to competent theologians in the form of an inquiry as to whether Paul's propositions on the debated questions are consistent with the received teaching in the schools, at

the present time. Such a question must be answered in a *negative*. The *tolerari potest*, or public announcement that Paul's views may be tolerated is at present impossible. Twenty years hence it may come, when these questions have been threshed out, and the theologians are alive to them, and have faced them in their treatises, but not yet."

Marcelle made an impatient movement of her shoulders and suddenly looked up. "This is all, no doubt, very interesting, but what is going to happen?"

George's face fell; at her tone and manner a look of deep pain rose in his eyes. "I was coming to that," he said, "it is what I expected, it is what I think you know already. He says that the only hope is that the *dubia* may be shelved and their answer deferred to the Greek Kalends. This is what the other side—Markham and Co.—will try to prevent. They of course want to force a decision."

I shivered. I saw what George had been doing, how he had been trying to prepare her mind, and how crudely he had blundered into the worst point at the last.

"You think," she said, looking up at him with a terribly white face and pinched features, "that that is a hope, the only hope," and then she laughed ironically. "Let him come back in twenty years, let his life be worn out, his work be hampered and despised. And then, when the theologians have been beaten at every point, and have become a laughing-stock to the thinkers, twenty years too late he is to come back! and meanwhile our religion is to be vilified and thousands of souls to be lost! *vingt ans après! Ah mon Dieu!*" With a louder laugh she looked up at the blue sky through the great circle, the open eye of heaven in the dome, so blue against the storm-worn glory of the brown stones: "*Vingt ans après, quelle charmante plaisanterie*, what paternal advice! And how about the interview with the Assessor, the promised interview?"

"I asked him that," said George, with an effort at an in-

different manner. "‘The Assessor is such a friend of mine,’ he replied, ‘that though I did not *advise* it, it could have been worked.’ It was arranged for apparently, but yesterday they received a French paper and an Italian paper with articles on the *Catholic International Review*, publishing the *dubia*. Fifty *dubia* are sent to the Holy Office without attracting any attention. They may be answered or ignored. But if the press makes ours a test case, the answer must be given, and if it is adverse it will seem after that to have the weight and publicity of a formal condemnation. And this is exactly what these particular articles are doing. They speak of the *dubia* as raising questions so vital, that all the thinking world will await with anxiety the answer to the question—‘Is Rome wide and tolerant, or is she obscurantist?’ etc., etc., and saying that the Count d’Etranges is using his personal influence with the Cardinal Secretary of the Holy Office and the Assessor in Rome. This was most unfortunate. The Consultor fears it has almost settled the matter against you. The Assessor was greatly annoyed, and said that now the only hope was that he should be able to say to the Markhamites, that neither he nor the Cardinal even knew the Count.”

These last words were the culminating point with Marcelle. “So that is their best kindness! To pretend they know nothing of Paul! *Ah mon Dieu!* the puerile diplomacy—the ridiculous intriguing. I shall go mad, I shall!” She got up from the step, and threw up her hands with a tragic gesture.

I tried to soothe her, to take her hand.

“Leave me, leave me alone,” she lifted her white and tearful face to the opening in the roof, as if hardly able to breathe. She looked ten years older; at the moment her beauty was that of a woman who has lost her youth and its hopes; a wild defiance shone in her black eyes.

“No, no,” she went on in an undertone, “don’t speak to

me—pray for me if you will. Don't misunderstand me. I am not hurt with George or with you, but, as you love me, Lisa, don't say things, or I shall answer. They will not know the lost sheep!" Then with a sudden change she clasped her hands, her eyes turned from the blinding blue above them to the crucifix on an altar near us. All sweetness, gentleness came into her face, the defiance had melted away; I see her now as she stood abashed, with her eyes full of tears, the Christian instinct bringing her in a moment from the glory of the pagan temple back to the foot of the cross.

"Oh, Lord," she said, in a low voice, "you know him. Pity me, pity me, that I may not sin in judging them, or how can I save him?" She turned her back to me, knelt down on the marble step behind her, and buried her face in her hands.

"Come away," I whispered to George, "come away, it is kinder." And we went out into the brightness and the noise of the streets. There we stood, unconscious of our surroundings, and there we talked.

"If *she* cannot hear a word of reason, what hope is there with *him*?" exclaimed George.

"How could you expect her to hear reason," I cried—"can't you see, don't you understand that this is an awful blow to her? Up to this she has really believed that he would win his case. You see, in reality, you and I have had little hope. We have understood something of the meaning of the persistent silence, the constant delays. I do want you to realise this, not to lose sight of what is going on in their minds or——"

"I hope I see and understand more than you think I do," said George; "but if I think too much about their point of view I shall be of no use to them. I own I had not realised how completely Marcelle has taken Paul's points, Paul's ideas for granted. We have been moving further apart than

I thought. I, on the other hand, had taken for granted that you two were capable of understanding the position of the people here. While Paul sees nothing but his own science, and expects unbounded sympathy for his work in one department, he has not an ounce of sympathy for those who have on their backs the whole care of the Churches. You would think that nothing else but scripture-critics existed in the world. He talks of the life of humanity, but he understands nothing, nothing of its actual concrete existence." He paused and gave a sharp sigh. "But I must not let myself go on like this now, Lisa; we must be practical, you and I have something to do, and that is to get these two out of Rome as quickly as possible."

"They will succeed then in driving him away," I exclaimed hastily.

An impatient sound escaped from George. "'Drive' if you like, but for his own sake. If he stays here and the case is pushed—and trust Canon Markham to push it—he must be condemned. If he leaves now, Markham and his friends will experience the pleasures of waiting and of silence, even as we have."

"I don't think he will go," I said.

"But he positively must. He must be got to see how the cause of liberty and progress will suffer by a condemnation."

"He won't see it, and he won't believe what you say. He won't believe that he will be condemned. He still thinks that his friends will carry the day; he is determined to fight it out. I know he will only say that you are deceived by a ruse of the enemy to get him out of the way."

George groaned. "Is there nobody he believes in, nobody who can influence him?"

"He only believes in the people who agree with him. He believes in Marcelle, because he never notices anything in her that is not an echo of himself; he believes in any of the young men who bring him stories of cardinals who are

favourable to him, or rumours of the Pope not trusting any of the present set of officials, or in anything in short in which he wishes to believe."

"Can you do nothing with him?"

We had been too anxious, too excited to be self-conscious, but at the last question I felt that I flushed deeply. I gathered myself together for a great effort. I could not allow any misunderstanding of my position to grow out of what we said, or what we did not say. I must keep before my own eyes and George's eyes, if we were forced into confidences such as these, the picture of my future.

"I am at present utterly useless," I said. "When I am his wife it will be different," then my voice failed me.

Do loyalty and truth always move smoothly in harness? In all life here below, whether personal or official, are there not moments when it is the worst offence against truth itself to speak the truth? I felt a serious, almost stern gaze bent upon me which I could not meet.

A moment later George spoke in a tone of masculine punctuality. "Go in and see if she will come now; it is past five o'clock."

I went in. Marcelle was sitting on a chair, her head leaning back on the top bar, her eyes closed. I touched her shoulder. "Yes," she said, "we will come." We walked down the little bit of street, and across the Piazza Minerva in silence. When we came into the hotel George turned into the smoking-room. Marcelle and I parted on the landing, with a silent kiss. Yet we knew that we three had only begun a talk that must be got on with, as soon as possible.

It was about half-past nine that evening, and Miss Mills and I were sitting in our little room, and for the hundredth time I had dropped my work on my dress, and Miss Mills had given me a quick glance which seemed to say, "It is hard to be as discreet as I am, for I love you, Lisa". To-

night her manner did not irritate, it barely reached my consciousness.

"It is a very beautiful idea," she said presently, which showed me that she must have been saying something else.

"Very," I answered, and she looked surprised. Then there was a knock at the door, and George came in. Miss Mills greeted him coldly; I knew she thought he ought to be Paul, whenever he came up to our drawing-room.

"I have been an hour with d'Etranges, and I can do nothing with him, absolutely nothing. We have spoken out only to find that we are poles asunder. In fact, I doubt if we ever were together."

Miss Mills gave a dry little cough.

George walked across the room and back, he hardly seemed to know that we were there.

"And after all," he said, "there is no one else like him! Curious that now I realise it as I have not felt it for months, now that he has told me to go my own way and mind my own business! I am free to go; if I think he ought to leave Rome, why don't I go away myself?" Then, suddenly standing still in front of me, "I have come to tell you that I am going. I can do no good here, and perhaps when I am out of his sight my words may come back to him with a less irritating effect; I can write coolly from a distance. I can't regret that I have known him, I shall thank God always for these two years. No one else will ever give life the aim, the stimulus, the hope, he has given it. He is walking blind-fold, but I can't believe he will ever fall over the precipice. After all, he has taught me of love of the Church, devotion to the Church as the home of light, of love, of joy for humanity. Lisa, Miss Fairfax, we shall never forget those evenings at Peak Hall when he talked, when,"—he stopped, he had not heeded the curious disapproving cough from Miss Mills, he had not thought of her, or indeed of me.

It was the tragedy of the break with d'Etranges that was

filling his mind ; it was the parting of the ways. To him it was the end of the greatest interest in life, the going out of the light of genius that had been for him the greatest of fascinations. There was nothing for Miss Mills to disapprove ; he had come to tell me his trouble as a schoolboy might have come to confide to his elder sister a great disillusion as to his special hero. I was merely the most easily found, in fact the only, person to whom he could speak, in Rome. What surprised me, and indeed surprised him, was that all along he had seemed critical of Paul, all along common-sense, difference of race, and unconsciously a totally different religious attitude, had put them partly in opposition. Now that the split had come, the fascination, the personal domination seemed all in all.

To be with Paul again, we four in the garden so far away, to thrill again as he spoke the old things that must fade from our minds if we heard them no more, that was what we wanted, what all the hope, the imagination of our youth cried out for. Miss Mills need not have been afraid, we were not thinking of ourselves. We were thinking of Paul. We were absorbed in the one thought, that Paul had told George to go away.

It was only for a few moments after all. Then, while George paced the room in silence, I thought of him and Marcelle. Now that there was a rupture, and knowing Paul, I could not doubt that it was a real one ; would Marcelle have to choose between them ? I repressed a sudden, wild sensation at the heart, that was sinful towards the others. I tried to face our position. I had had no rupture with Paul, I was still to be his wife, I was promised, affianced. My soul shivered at the thought of life with Paul, without George, possibly without Marcelle. How could I ? how could I ? I could not, I could not—and yet—Paul's face seemed to rise before me, Paul condemned, suffering, should he also be disowned ? What meant that devotion to him of

which I had spoken and thought? No, if it was impossible for me to go on alone with him, it was equally far more impossible for me to go away from him now.

George was not an egoist, but he was absorbed that evening in the end of his friendship with Paul, in the break with his leader. It may seem to others an exaggerated feeling, but then they would show that they could not fathom the value to him of what he had lost. I knew that that loss would leave a mark on him for life. Love, strangely enough, that great mystery, may be lost and found again. But the peculiar friendship of men who have moved and worked together for great ends, be it on a big scale or a small, leaves a mark on the soul never to be effaced. Listen to the wail in the verses of Clough, find out the deep scars in the heart of Montalembert, and then allow to poor George some excuse if that evening he forgot Marcelle, forgot me, and only thought of himself and Paul.

It was half-past ten, and Miss Mills had cast longing glances at the clock, and disapproving ones, and at length angry ones, when a silence of some moments, regulated only by the loud ticking, and George's marching up and down, was interrupted by the entrance of Marcelle.

She came in quickly, and stood looking at George. For a second I thought she was going to rush up to him, to hold out her arms to him, but he had paused at the fireplace, and did not seem to see her. Then she stood for a moment in the middle of the room, as if stunned, and put her hands up to her face. I could not tell what was passing in her mind, but she seemed, for one moment only, to shrink, to be smaller. She had on a black gown, open at the neck, and a little lace shawl which she had thrown over her head to come up in the lift. It fell back as, with a curious dignity and grace of movement, she walked to the other side of the chimney-piece.

"George," she said, in a low voice that pierced my heart, "I have heard all from Paul, and I have come to ask you

for——” she stopped and looked very straight in his eyes, and I could see in hers that they had met his, “for God’s sake not to go away.”

I bent down not to see them. Oh, why, why had she said “for God’s sake?” I thought she would have said for her own sake. Would she not even let him feel that it was for her own dear sake she would ask him? It was cruel, cruel. It was the old story, taking everything, and giving him nothing. Why not to-night of all nights soothe that sore heart with her love? If they could have wept together that evening, how gladly I would have sat by, soothed by the sight, or have left them alone together. But now——

“He has told me to go,” said George, in a low voice, looking at her very gently.

“Paul is mad with suffering and impatience,” she answered. “You are sad at the end of two years’ work. For him it is so many many years that he has worked, and his work is to be nothing. He is not himself, he knows not his friends from his foes. Oh, George, don’t go away, don’t leave him alone. Lisa, tell George the truth,—that he is the only hope if things go wrong. Mind, I don’t think you are right. I can’t, I won’t believe that they will condemn him. But you think they will, and surely you will not leave him alone.”

It seemed to me that she was making the usual mistake—always asking for Paul, never for herself. It was a wrong note. George, I thought, looked a little sulky.

“I can’t force myself on him when he doesn’t want me,” he said. “The sight of me adds to his irritation. He likes to have McNeil or Mme. S. and the other gossips about him. McNeil told him to-night that Cardinal Mattei will hurry back to Rome to take his part, that he knows as a fact that the Pope’s sympathy is on his side; that somebody had said to somebody else, that he had had it for certain that the Pope had told a Monsignore that after all there could be no condemnation without his consent. Then he tells me these

things in triumph, and it drives him mad to see that I don't believe a word of them. I know that I am doing more harm than good now. I don't know what makes him see everything crooked." He gave a little laugh: "he has just told me that as I am so anxious to be on the side of the authorities and to save my reputation as a *dévol*, it is far my best plan to go home and write an article against himself. It is all twisted. What motive have I for posing as a *dévol*? In my world in England it is much more interesting to be unorthodox. I don't mind, at least I don't think I do, what other people say, but for Paul to think of me like that——".

"No, no, he doesn't," pleaded Marcelle, "he is living in a dream, a nightmare. Give him a little time, George. Ah, Lisa, why don't you persuade him—you could?"

She turned to me a face utterly sad and appealing, but how could I utter one word. I felt that I was flushing deeply. I to persuade George, ah me! He hardly knew that I was in the room.

"Of course," said George, with deepened colour on his stern face, "I will stay if you want me. Most honestly, I was only going because I thought I was making him far worse. As long as I am here, there is less hope of his going away. And listen to me, both of you, there is no time to lose. Go he must. Even if other things were different, you can see for yourselves that he is doing no good here. But believe me and not McNeil, and go: it is an absolutely certain fact that if he stays here his views will be condemned."

Marcelle sat down as he said this, and seemed lost in thought. She was much more prepared to listen to him now than she had been in the afternoon. For a moment, I thought that he would convince her, as he had already convinced me, but no. She could not believe that Paul's opinions could be condemned; it was much more likely that George was wrong. All the one-sided gossip of people, who

for varied motives brought all their false hopes to Paul, was in her mind.

George looked at her in utter sadness, standing a little aloof, but then was not that her own doing?

"Above all," he said, "Paul must not insist on seeing the Cardinal Prefect, *that* I know would be fatal." Marcelle was silent. I knew that she believed this idea to be a ruse of Paul's enemies.

It struck eleven and Miss Mills rose.

"Well," said George, "good-night, think it over and talk it over. I believe you will see that I am best out of it. You know my address, write to me. I will not go till I hear from you."

I don't think he knew that he was leaving the room without any further farewell. As the door shut behind him, Marcelle started up, and then sank down again, and cried bitterly.

"Ah, George, George," she wailed. I knelt down by her and put my arm round her. She shook it off.

"Don't, don't touch me," she cried, then more gently, "let me weep this one time, Lisa."

Miss Mills had left us; presently she came back in her funny, short dressing-gown, her lace evening cap on one side of her grey chignon, bearing a cup of tea, at the sight of which Marcelle began to laugh hysterically.

"Ah! comme c'est anglais, comme c'est anglais!"

"There, drink this," said Miss Mills, in a commanding tone, and she bustled off again.

"Drink it, quick, quick," said Marcelle, and Miss Mills found an empty cup when she came back.

"The tea certainly calmed her wonderfully," said Miss Mills, directly after Marcelle had left us, as she bade me good-night.

She paused in my room, holding her candle high and sloping in her hand, her tumbled lace cap imparting a curiously rakish air to her dear old face.

“Lisa, nobody asks my opinion, but I have my thoughts all the same. You must remember that Mr. George Sutcliffe (with a great emphasis on the Mr.) is very young. I think it would show better feeling on his part if he could submit his judgment to a man older and wiser than himself, like the Comte d’Etranges. As I said to the Count a few nights ago, and he perfectly agreed with me, intellectual pride is what causes so much trouble with the young men of the present day.”

VI.

WE did not see George again for three or four days. What exactly passed between Paul and Marcelle about him, I do not know. She told me once, that she still believed that if there were time enough, other influences might be brought to bear on the Vatican, and in the end all might be well; her manner was quiet and reserved. I spent a good part of the day with her and Paul, and I read aloud to him, very doubtful as to whether he was paying any attention. We read Shakespeare and Scott. Every now and then he did listen, and made some comment that comes back to me now whenever I read those great things again. Then he would relapse into an attitude that was to me a new one. He would sit with his head slightly bent, his hands lying one on the other, in an attitude of utter patience, while the downcast eyes held a curiously sardonic light, and the weary face seemed to suppress a faint inclination to smile. The furrows on the forehead had deepened in these last weeks. He spoke to me no more of the great controversies in which he had tried to educate me. I am sure he gave no further thought to what might be passing in my mind. But he sometimes smiled at me, and thanked me when I had been reading to him. Once he said that I had a singular power of giving refreshment. I was standing by him then, and he put his hand on mine. I had never known a father, but I think his look at me was paternal, as far as he was conscious of my presence.

Then Mr. McNeil came in unannounced, quickly, and with a familiarity that I disliked.

"I have important news," he said, his little roundabout, red face shining with self-importance. "My friend Fiocchi has seen Cardinal Mattei."

"And how is his Eminence?" said Paul dryly, but his eyes were bright with eagerness.

"It is an entire mistake to suppose him to be unfriendly," McNeil went on, "only he is not free. He said to Fiocchi: 'Why be discouraged? Is it not a giant taken among pigmies!' or something to that effect—almost those words: 'Wait till the matter reaches the Holy Father'."

"He is right," said Paul, sitting up, speaking in a deep, earnest voice. "And my friend, I am not discouraged, whoever else may be. My appeal was to the Pope, not to any chance Dominican inquisitor who, no longer able to burn our bodies, would stifle our souls with slow torture. We have to overlook this *canaille*, and pass on to the steps of the throne, the rock of St. Peter and of ages."

Mr. McNeil bent forward as if anxious not to lose one syllable of the prophet's utterance. He would, I knew, repeat these words with delight to every one he met. "I have been with d'Etranges, and he has been magnificent," etc., etc.

"Well may you call them *canaille*," said McNeil. "I have just heard a story," and he paused and looked at me.

I would have stayed in spite of him, had not a kindly glance from Paul also suggested that I was free to go away. As I left him I paused a moment, and looked back. They were waiting for my departure before the story was told. "Oh, Paul, Paul," I cried in my heart, "no longer the same Paul, you who despised gossip, and lived on great thoughts, will you let every shiny, wriggly, little human worm play with you, while George is turned away?" I had my hat on. I slipped downstairs. Miss Mills had agreed that I might just cross the piazza by myself, to the church. I went in there, and knelt down to pray. This last fortnight I had

prayed more than in any time before. As to Marcelle, I believe she was up at five, and in the church till nearly eight every morning, but I did not like to ask her. Any time in which Paul did not want her was spent in the churches. She went with Miss Mills, if I were reading to him, to visit shrines of saints and all places of pilgrimage. Miss Mills wrote for her to many convents for prayers for her intention. If Miss Mills understood what that intention was, she never said so, and her company seemed the best rest for Marcelle. They had gone now, having left me with Paul, to pray at St. Paul's *fuori le mura*. I felt very lonely, and after I had prayed for a time I got up to go.

George was standing near the door.

We went out together, and walked across to the Pantheon.

"I must have five minutes with you," he said, "I have something to tell you."

But when we were inside he did not at once tell me anything new, our thoughts turned to Marcelle.

"It is so strange," George said, "that she should have been so startled at what I said when we were here last. After all that had passed, I was relieved at the hope of d'Etranges escaping condemnation, of there being a way out—a dignified way out. Also, I suppose I was relieved at seeing what a good case the authorities have, and that I betrayed my relief. I own that after these weeks in Rome I should be very sorry to believe what d'Etranges is beginning to believe of the official world here. The Church is Divine and they are human, but those folk would have us believe that they are inhuman. But I asked you to come here not to talk of my own views, but to give you news, and bad news. Paul has, in spite of all hints, advice and warning, insisted on an interview with the Cardinal Secretary. This will force the Cardinal, as they have said all along, to take the matter up, and is exactly the same as forcing him to condemn us."

"To condemn you?" I said, surprised at the plural pronoun.

"Why, yes," he said. "Do you suppose that I am going to wriggle out of my responsibility as editor of the *International*?"

"But Paul asked you to go away, and leave him to manage for himself?"

"Yes, but I have gone too far with him to go back. And if I stick to him, I believe that once his views are condemned he will turn to me, and we can then make our submission together."

"But it would be horribly unfair to treat the condemnation of his views as a condemnation of yours," I cried.

"Not as long as I associate myself with Paul. I have thought it over during these last days, and I must either do one thing or the other. I cannot leave them at this crisis. I must be with d'Etranges."

It seemed to me again that his engagement to Marcelle had put him in a false position. And after all, it was only for Paul's sake; she gave Paul the first place always. I felt hurt for George, but his own manner was utterly businesslike and unemotional.

"I must be quick or you will be late for *déjeuner*. The interview with the Cardinal cannot be avoided now, but the Dominican Consultor, who is determined to save us if he can, tells me that there is just a chance of our making it non-official, and therefore non-committal for the Cardinal. And for this purpose it will be a great help if you and Marcelle are present. All the etiquette shall be as of a visit of courtesy. I can see that they want to take from Paul all excuse for complaining that he has not been received by his Eminence. Then the Cardinal with some simplicity thinks that by treating him with distinction and consideration he can smooth over his disappointment."

I gave a sad little laugh, and George echoed it with a sharp

sigh. "The Dominican," he went on, "who has seen Paul, knows better, but he thinks it of importance to show Markham and Co. that the Count is in no personal disgrace here. The plan, as I read it, is to give Paul one big, kindly hint that he cannot be listened to on these burning topics, after the line he has taken. All will now turn on whether Paul is willing, or indeed able, to take such a hint. It seems to me only a choice of evils, but I think their plan is the least dangerous, on the principle that least said is soonest mended. The old French Bishop from Marcelle's home has been asked privately to arrive a little sooner than was expected, in order to present them. He is quite unintellectual, and he is sure to talk of Paul's family, and of Marcelle's mother. I believe Madame de Pourcelles originally asked him to come, to see if he could help to keep Paul out of mischief here. Now of course, Paul will not want you two to come, but I think that if you can get Marcelle to insist upon it, he will yield. Stay, you must judge for yourself; he may not mind whether you go or not, and in that case it may only put it into his mind that you will be *de trop* if you ask him to let you go. I can only leave it to your tact."

"I will do my best," were my last faltering words as we parted.

VII.

IMMEDIATELY afterwards Paul received a note from the Consulor appointing the day and hour of the interview. There was to be a Consistory, and the Cardinal Secretary of the Holy Office would see us in the Vatican itself after it was over.

We did not climb up the steps of St. Peter's, or go into the public galleries, but with black veils on our heads we approached the Swiss Guard at the first great doorway of the private courts, and asked for the Cardinal. Paul, to my great relief, had made no objection to our going with him. I have a confused recollection of the wide, shallow, endless flights of stairs within the bronze doors, of passing through the Loggie of Raphael, then, I think, down a gallery with more guards, until we found ourselves in a long narrow anteroom, where we were met by Monsignor Lapetit, and by George's friend, Monsignor Mackenzie, from the Scotch College. Monsignor Lapetit exchanged warm greetings with Marcelle, and told her how recently he had seen her mother, and Marcelle expressed her astonishment and pleasure at seeing him. Monsignor Mackenzie tried to make conversation with Paul, and Miss Mills and I stood a little in the background. I was too excited to notice at the moment, that although we waited thus for quite twenty minutes, neither Marcelle nor Paul presented me to the Bishop. Paul stood almost silent, a look of patient suffering on his face, his eyes cast down: I could not see their expression; but he held himself at his full height, and dwarfed the Scotch

priest, although the latter was a big man. Various officials passed through the anteroom, and several other people were introduced.

Presently a priest came from an inner room, his plain cassock contrasting with the gorgeous uniforms of the guards. It was a typical Southern face, almost hard in repose, and wreathed in smiles when speaking. Our cards were presented to him by a gorgeous person in plum-coloured silk, with other cards. He then came at once to Monsignor Lapetit, and the most elaborate courtesies passed between them. Paul and Marcelle were presented, and he made low bows, but seemed to have no personal knowledge of them. After this he disappeared. In a few minutes he came back, and led us into the next room, with the air of one who is charged to show especial favour by almost royal mandate. There was something singularly mediæval in the parade of these outward forms, something characteristic of an earlier civilisation, as well as of a different race from ours. I could have imagined myself in the antechamber of the Grand Monarque. There seemed to be a signification of favour or the reverse in every form, a very science of bows, an art of seeing or not seeing people in the room. And I could feel that every minor official entered into the game and enjoyed it. What an atmosphere for Paul! But next—we were in the room in which the Cardinal was to receive us.

He was standing in front of a sofa, all red silk and gilt, more of a throne than a sofa. He came forward several steps to meet us, and greeted Monsignor Lapetit with official warmth. But when the Bishop presented Paul and Marcelle he made a low bow to Paul, acknowledging him, in that curious language of the manner, as a person of great importance. Then he asked Marcelle to sit down beside him on the sofa; the Bishop took a seat on his left; Paul was opposite to them, and Miss Mills and I a little farther off. Monsignor Mackenzie presented me after the d'Etranges,

and said that my father, who was well known in England for his devotion to the Church, was a great friend of their father's, and that I was travelling in company with my aunt, Miss Mills. I dared not at first look at the Cardinal, but when we were all seated, relying on my insignificance, I ventured to do so. It was a face of great strength, very thin and austere. After the play-acting, as it felt to me, and the ceremony with which he received us, I was startled by the spiritual force and light in his eyes. For a moment it struck me too that he was a typical Roman, a descendant of the masters of the world. Then my eye turned to Paul, who was looking straight at the Cardinal, the picture of keen, living, intellectual force, ready for combat.

"I have asked," I heard him begin, but the Cardinal had turned to Marcelle, and was speaking to her, and inclusively to us all. I could have as well imagined having the audacity to interrupt Louis XIV. as this Prince of the Church.

"I knew your father," he said. "I have also the honour to know your mother—I trust that she is well."

Marcelle seemed a little uncertain as to whether her mother was enjoying good health or not, but Monsignor Lapetit came to her assistance, and said that he was charged to give an excellent account of Mme. de Pourcelles to her daughter. The Cardinal then begged Marcelle to convey to her mother "*i miei complimenti*". Then the Bishop added that he had recently seen the Archbishop of Paris, and to him the Cardinal sent his "*complimenti profondi*".

Meanwhile, Paul leant forward, his eyes still fixed on the Cardinal, who met them with a smiling countenance.

"You have brought your sister to visit the shrines of the Eternal City," he said.

"Ah Eminence," said Paul, and his voice had in it no trace of ceremony, "I have come as a devout son of the Church to——"

"That we know," said the Cardinal, "your good works in

France, and even in England, are known here, are they not, Monsignor Mackenzie?"

Monsignor Mackenzie hastened to put in his oar, and to say that Mdlle. d'Etranges had devoted herself to the poor in England.

The Cardinal turned instantly to Marcelle.

"But Eminence, we have come and have solicited an audience because my brother——"

"And this young lady," said the Cardinal, turning towards me, "*S'occupe-t-elle aussi de bonnes œuvres?*"

Monsignor Mackenzie then told the Cardinal that I was an author. The Cardinal bowed towards me, and offered me his "*complimenti*," and began a short discourse on St. Paul's view of women, and on the works of St. Theresa.

I grinned like an idiot, and at last ventured to say that I only wrote little stories, and had no presumption to do more. Faithful to what George wanted of me, I tried in vain to think of anything else to say, and then Miss Mills, to our astonishment, began to tell the Cardinal, in fluent French, that I had recently lost my mother and that she had been a saint. The Cardinal seemed to pass through a variety of emotions, and Miss Mills thoroughly enjoyed her innings. It was not for nothing she had spent years in the best French families.

Paul glanced at her, and my heart smote me, as a tear fell from Marcelle's downcast face. Ah me! I knew she was in torture! Could George be right, could this be real kindness. I felt the torrent that was stemmed up in Paul ready to overflow, and I trembled.

He then half-rose. "Eminence," he said, but a door close to us opened, and the private secretary who had introduced us appeared, bowing and smiling in the doorway, and then whispered a few words to the Cardinal.

"*Mille pardons, mon cher Comte*," said the Cardinal, "but my secretary comes to tell me that you have accorded to you

a privilege now alas! not very common, an audience with the Holy Father. His Holiness will make an effort, contrary to the advice of his doctors, to see you for a moment. He knows of the distinguished services rendered by you and your parents to the Church. The Holy Father does not wish you to leave Rome without his blessing."

It was wholly unexpected, and my heart beat wildly. This then was the explanation of our interview taking place in the Vatican itself. This was the crowning-point of the policy of softening Paul by treating him with the greatest consideration and distinction. I hardly know how we were dismissed. It was as if not a moment were to be lost. The Cardinal went with us to the door, and amidst bows and compliments and waving of the hand we were got rid of. But the Cardinal had apparently made a mistake, there was no danger of our being late; we waited an hour in other anterooms. It did not seem to me any time. Marcelle and Paul were now quite silent. Paul seemed turned into stone. The Bishop, who had a kindly, gentle manner, chatted with Monsignor Mackenzie, and Miss Mills lamented without ceasing that she had not brought anything with her for the Pope to bless.

At length a young Monsignore appeared, who, with friendly smiles, and much less ceremony than anybody else we had seen, took us into another room.

"The Holy Father is very unwell to-day, and exhausted after the Consistory. He can only see you for a few minutes; do not kiss his foot, as it makes him giddy."

I don't know what the room was like in which we had our brief audience. I recall only the impression of an old man of intense simplicity, of an intense paternity. I felt that one thrill, one thought was within us all as we knelt before that friend of God's. In what secret places had the soul that looked out from those eyes been with his Maker? Whence had he brought for us that overflowing sweetness

and love? In what school of suffering had that gentleness been learnt? Whence came the strength to support that world-sadness? It seemed to me as if this child of the Heavenly Father had stood almost alone in these latter days by the Cross on which his Master had suffered; and there he had learnt secrets not given to man to utter; secrets of patience, of love, of infinite yearning for the souls of men, for the souls of all men. It was because he had been able to answer the Divine question with that same answer, "Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee," that he had been given the task of Peter.

It was over in a moment, we each kissed his hand, then as we knelt round him, he blessed us, and in his blessing he prayed that God would bless us, and all who were dear to us, "*i vostri cari*," our undertakings and above all our virtue—that we might seek to be truly Christian, and to have the science of the saints. He asked us to pray for him that he too might make some progress in that knowledge. "*Mi vergogno*," he said, "that I am so unworthy to follow the sainted ones who have gone before me in my office."

I do not know how Paul looked as he knelt there. It was obvious that there was no possibility of speech. Only one of us spoke to the Pope, and it was not articulate speech. As we were leaving the room, Marcelle stepped quickly back, and knelt again, raising her head, and looking at him in an agony of supplication. He laid his hand on her head for a moment and waited for her to speak, but she could not. Yet their eyes spoke to each other more than words could have done.

"*Poverina, poverina*," he almost whispered, in accents of suffering and compassion, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, and He will bring it to pass."

"The comedy in two acts is finished," said Paul, as we walked silently by his side, out on to the piazza in front of St. Peter's. "It is now time for the applause."

VIII.

THAT evening, after table d'hôte, I sat with Paul and Marcelle, and by his request I read aloud, mechanically enough. He leant back, and listened for a time; for a time it seemed as if there were still some power to soothe in Shakespeare. Then his face changed, his lips tightened. He looked down with the new sardonic smile that frightened me, and then from time to time he flashed a look across the room, as if some enemy stood there, at his mercy. Meanwhile, Marcelle sat and knitted, never raising her pale face for a moment. Presently a waiter came, and brought cards on a salver.

"Show them up," said Paul in Italian, and to my surprise George came in, escorting a little old priest, thin, small and shrivelled. Paul seemed quite friendly in his manner to George, but both were occupied in installing the old man. And when I heard the name I did not wonder. It was a name known to Europe, and indeed to the civilised world. There was something academic in the old man's manner, in his greeting of us ladies, but there was also an intensity of refinement all his own. A little figure of shrunken ivory, but carved in exquisite lines, eyes weak with age, but with an outlook most exquisite and subtle. He appeared to be very tired, and I suspected that he had not wished to make the effort to come. George's eyes were fixed on him with an anxious reverence, and a certain look of responsibility.

"You will excuse," said a gentle, musical voice, "this visit on the part of a stranger, but I was told that you were about to leave Rome."

"Not yet," said Paul, in a deep low voice rather like a growl.

"I am deeply interested in your case, if you will allow me to say so. You do not object to my speaking of it?"

"I do not wish for silence," said Paul. "I ask for speech, for open, candid speech. I have no love of diplomacy, or indeed of hypocrisy."

The little old man seemed to shrink at these words, as the sensitive plant shrinks at a rude touch, and for a moment he appeared unable to speak.

"I understand your feelings," he said, "if it is not an impertinence in me to say so. Forty years ago a young man I knew came here also with a case; he also had appealed to the Mother of Churches, against local oppression; he also had very near at heart the intellectual difficulties of his day; he also yearned to make a bridge between the intellectual man outside the Church and the Ark of Salvation. He came here then, confiding in authority, laying, in genuine, filial confidence his case at the feet of superiors. For two years he stayed here unnoticed; he thought at first that it was because he had no introductions, no influence in high places. But while he stayed here he had time to think, I"—he gave a little smile at the unconscious change of pronoun—"he lived," he said, "almost alone in this city of tombs, and gradually as he dwelt here he seemed to be learning some great secret. First he felt himself to be very small in the huge antiquity of the city, then as time went on Rome itself seemed to find its place in the scheme of the world and of man's history. Gradually he began to see that in the great march of humanity, no day and no thought stood alone, and yet that neither might be allowed to overstep its allotted bounds—I saw that we, the creatures of a day, are not permitted to live in yesterday nor yet in to-morrow, and that while fitful glances of the future may come to some of us, these are not our appointed daylight. If I see somewhat

further than those about me, I see also how infinitesimally little I know, compared with those who are to come. If I cannot fathom the secrets of the individual man I see, how can I pierce those of a generation not yet formed? In no stage of development can we judge of the present, because we are part of it, and it is greater than we. But even more mysterious must be the outcome of that which now is, and which will be revealed in men, as individual, as personal, as ourselves. I can only say, 'This much I saw, or seemed to see,' and truth and error I know to have been mixed up, to me, inextricably in the whole. The souls and hearts of men will be guided in the process of sifting that truth and error. But how should I cry out in the market-place, offering my wares to all passers-by, when I cannot tell my food from my poison? Let me take them aside and wait. Truth has never been stifled, and if it is whispered to the rushes, or told in the closet it will come out, for kindred minds will suspect its presence, and will find it and deal with it of themselves, and it will at length come forth to the world, delayed indeed, but ripened and winnowed.

"But then I thought again—and with sorrow. Let me be passed by, let me decrease, let this poor instrument be thrown aside, let me gain the strength of character and light of mind born of abnegation—but have I any right to give up a public fight for the sake of truth? Would not a silent work be a base cowardice towards my own contemporaries? Am I not bound to give them every fraction of truth I possess? And then one day, trying to put aside these thoughts as a snare to my peace, I opened the Confessions of St. Augustine. I turned to the 12th Book, thinking I might there find comfort. I read of the many minds who received the same words of Moses in very different ways, because they were adapted to convey different degrees of truth, as each was able to bear it. For all truth is not truth to those who cannot bear it, and if you burden the unfit, you take from

them what they might otherwise have been able to bear, and so they risk to lose the whole. You know the passage—St. Augustine having in mind the Scripture critics, the newest lights of his own day, is describing and defending those who, as he writes, take a child's interpretation of the book of Genesis, who when they hear God said, 'Let it be made, and it was made,' 'conceive of words begun and ended, sounding in time, and passing away; after whose departure that came into being, which was commanded so to do; and whatever of the like sort, men's acquaintance with the material world would suggest. In whom being yet little ones and carnal, while their weakness is by this humble kind of speech, carried on as in a mother's bosom, their faith is wholesomely built up, whereby they hold assured, that God made all natures, which in admirable variety their eye beholdeth around. Which words, if any despising, as too simple, with a proud weakness, shall stretch himself beyond the guardian nest; he will, alas, fall miserably. Have pity, O Lord God, lest they who go by the way trample on the unfledged bird, and send Thine angel to replace it into the nest, that it may live, till it can fly.

“ ‘But others, unto whom these words are no longer a nest, but deep, shady fruit-bowers, see the fruits concealed therein, fly joyously around, and with cheerful notes seek out and pluck them. For reading and hearing these words, they see that all times past and to come are surpassed by Thy eternal and stable abiding; and yet that there is no creature formed in time not of Thy making——’ ”

Curiously monotonous and musical was the old man's utterance, and so far, he had not hesitated for a moment. To me a remarkable memory in a man of intellect is as attractive as the same thing is repulsive in a fool, for it seems in him to be a faint echo of a Divine stability. But then he hesitated, stammered, and at length, giving a weary little shake of the head, finished with a sentence without

a beginning—" 'might all be made very good whether they abide around Thee, or being in gradation removed in time and place, make or undergo the beautiful variations of the Universe. These things they see, and rejoice, in the little degree they here may, in the light of Thy truth.' And ever since that reading, which was near to the beginning of a long agony, those words have haunted me : ' Have pity, O Lord God, lest they who go by the way trample on the unfledged bird, and send Thine angel to replace it into the nest, that it may live until it can fly'. That fledgeling is made for flight in its appointed time. I must leave it to Him who ever chose and preferred with a Divine predilection the things that are weak and foolish—but I must go on myself in silent, hidden toil in my appointed task. More spiritual work was for saints, the groping of the intellect was for me. That intellect which seems to be the least gift in the estimation of the Creator, but which must not be hidden in a napkin.

"Forgive my egotism, I cannot but pity that man now. He had learnt his secret, but it was too late, humanly speaking. Things had gone too far. I was ready at last to give up my case and go away with the secret of my life. But I had pushed things too fast and too far. The authorities had not wished to condemn, they had tried in vain to make me go away, and I wanted to force them to learn of me what to teach others. They had in the end to say me 'yea or nay'—and the huge organism cast out the food I offered, because of the poisonous grains that were mixed in it.

"It came to a time on Christmas Day, when I had said my three Masses, and was reading my Breviary in the cloisters of the monastery in which I had found the kindest hospitality. The sun shone, the day seemed heaven on earth, and I, a small but happy little object therein. And as I prayed and dreamed, I felt as I had never felt before, the littleness of the human mind, in comparison to its moral and its spiritual life. I saw in imagination the vast crowds

throughout the world, who had adored the Babe at Bethlehem that morning, while throughout the great round world one chant had been taken up from the poor, the weak, the suffering—*Venite adoremus Dominum*. I felt then, how entirely it was the work of the Church to feed those multitudes, and not to let anything interfere with that daily food. And if a few intellectuals of us had to suffer, if the world had to mock us for not understanding, had we not the means for endurance? Might it not be just our probation to endure? And as to those who had not the light, were they not also God's creatures, and could He not take them to heaven in His own way? Full, then, of peace and light, I paced the cloisters when a letter was brought to me. It was my condemnation. I can see the words now in their fearful vehemence and strength. I was then crushed, beaten down; the car of the ecclesiastical Juggernaut had gone over me, I was a priest disgraced and condemned. Heaven help any man so placed! Heaven did help me. In the city of the saints, at the tombs of the martyrs, I learnt patience, made my submission, and went away."

The gentle, even voice paused.

"The years that followed, I own to you," he said at length, "were worse than the first months. I was suspected by my brother priests, pointedly snubbed by my Bishop. I went on studying, a lonely, obscure student. And why," he said suddenly looking at Paul, "have I asked your patience to listen to me this evening? Why tell a story that I have never told before? Because, my dear Count, I am now most unwillingly a Consultor of the Holy Office. My opinions are such as they were forty years ago, with the exception of a few gross errors, now abandoned by the world at large; but time, which has rectified those errors, has confirmed much of what I maintained then and maintain to-day. The movement of thought in my department has been singularly rapid, the process of assimilation in the Church to me now

seems almost alarmingly quick. I was called to Rome on the formation of a Special Commission some few years ago, and then I was kept where I am at present through a chain of circumstances too long to relate. To-night there was brought to me a letter from you to the Holy Office."

We all started at these words, and I could see that to George as well as to Marcelle this was news.

"In this letter you describe the delays from which you have suffered. You urge for a decision on these two questions of Darwinism, and the inspiration of the Bible. You say that official authority must decide one way or another; that the questions are burning ones, and cannot be ignored; and that you will take further delay as equivalent to a decision that your views are tenable, and to a *tolerari potest*, and that you will declare publicly that you have informed the Holy Office of this your intention. I have come to ask you, as one who has passed by the same way, and made the same mistakes, God help us both, to take back that letter. In that letter you would force the Holy Office to speak, and if it speaks, it will be in the same sense as what I read in the cloisters, on Christmas Day, forty years ago."

He handed a long letter to Paul. There was silence.

"I am sorry, *mon père*," came in Paul's iciest tones, "I am sorry, but that letter was written in no hasty mood of irritation or resentment. After the immense courtesy with which I have been treated, that would of course be impossible. Your personal reminiscences have interested me immensely. But kindly observe one point. Your case, you said, 'had been taken up'. It was a case fought for by two sides; so is mine. Things have moved since your day, as the fact of a man of your reputation being where you are goes to prove. I do not believe that my case is lost. I will not believe that the Church is so sunk in darkness and ignorance, in cowardice and sloth, that they will simply condemn me on the strength of the current theological phraseology. The ostrich

hiding his head in the sand would be wise compared to them. No, if your reverence insists on leaving that letter on my table, I must again consign it to the care of the usual postman. In it I have said all that is necessary. I have asked—as an additional proof of the courtesy of the officials,—that the decision of the Holy Office be forwarded to me personally, directly it is arrived at.”

The little old man had remained utterly motionless the while. Then in the same entirely courteous, but now very reserved accents, he went on :—

“Monsieur le Comte,” he said, “one word more. Believe me, on the word of a priest and a gentleman, this is no ruse, no movement of diplomacy. I have to tell you distinctly and without subterfuge, that if you send that letter, your condemnation is a matter of hours.”

“I am grateful to you for this warning, my first and last *Sommation*,” said Paul, with an ironical smile. “I shall be the more prepared for its arrival.”

“Then I have to wish you a good evening,” said the little old man, rising with the quietest, most ladylike gentleness.

“And I to thank you for your visit,” said Paul, as he opened the door with a very low bow.

George followed, shaking hands with him as if he were an ordinary acquaintance.

Paul’s way and manner had been singularly unattractive, but one could as soon have felt angry with a man in delirium. As he sank wearily back in his chair, my heart yearned over him, and I felt that I could spend my life to help him. I moved impulsively forward, and knelt down by him, and caught his hand.

“Ah, Paul !” I cried, “*mon ami*, my master, do, do listen to him. Oh, Paul, have some pity on me and on those who love you.” I leant my head on his hand.

“Poor little thing,” he said, “so you are taken in by them too. What a waste of emotion !”

It came almost as a slap in my face ; there seemed to me a complete contempt and indifference in the tone. He had never spoken to me like that before, but I had never before ventured to differ from him openly in the smallest degree. I knew then that I was utterly and completely useless. I might be ready to sacrifice all for him, but he was not heeding me in the least. And meanwhile, Marcelle was knitting in silence, as if everything depended on the rapid movement of the shining needles. I slipped away, and sat for some time in a stunned and stupid apathy with Miss Mills.

IX.

NEXT morning Paul went out early by himself, and I do not know where he spent the day. Marcelle, Miss Mills and I made the pilgrimage of the seven churches. A week dragged by, much in the same way as that day. Paul seemed to wish to be alone; he often went into the Campagna, and one night he slept at Orvieto. Whenever I met him, he had that same bearing of immensely tired patience and subdued scorn.

One day he passed some hours in the church of the Madonna Sopra Minerva, and twice I read to him in the evenings. Marcelle seemed to grow visibly thinner each day that passed. George did not come again; he wrote to Marcelle every day, urging her to persuade Paul to leave Rome.

"It is of no use," she said, as she put one of these letters in her pocket; "he does not know Paul, or he must see that it is of no use. Lisa, would you come with me this afternoon to meet George at the Vatican galleries? He wants to see me, and I want to speak to him. We need not have the Mills, need we?"

I thought not, so we two girls got into a little carriage to drive to the piazza of St. Peter.

"Lisa," she said, after a moment's silence, "I know that we must now prepare for afterwards. Ever since the little old priest came, I have known that; my instinct told me that he was speaking the truth. Paul has too much confi-

dence, too much hope to feel it ; he cannot believe that they will condemn his views. But that old man was simple and sincere, whatever the others may be. Now, what I want to discuss with George is the afterwards. I want to take Paul right away, hundreds of miles away, and at once. If I take him far away, say to the Cape of Good Hope, his nerves will calm down, there will be nobody to irritate him, and if there are some painful controversies afterwards, he will not hear of them for months. But we must go alone. George must go back to England," she hesitated, "and you dear, also".

"I believe you are right," I said sadly.

"Then in a year's time, or only a little longer, let us pray that we may meet at Peak Hall and sing *Gaudeamus* together, on the Feast of the Assumption." She turned on me a radiant smile, but the radiance was not quite of this earth, and I felt that we were as near to the eternal *Gaudeamus* of the angels, as we were to another *Gaudeamus* in the little chapel among the moors.

I held her hand in silence as we drove into the Piazza di San Pietro, where George stood waiting for us in the sun. I saw from his face that something had happened. He helped us down in silence.

"It has come ; he has received it," he said.

"What, the condemnation ?" we exclaimed together.

"Yes."

"Where is he ?" said Marcelle.

"There, in the basilica, kneeling at the tomb of St. Peter," he said, pointing to the vast building before us.

Marcelle in silence turned away and moved slowly towards the steps, and we followed her. Many and wide are those steps at any time, but that day they appeared interminable. We had nearly reached the porch, when one of the doors opened, and Paul came out.

He walked very straight ; he was bareheaded, upright in figure, but with his great forehead a little bent :—Paul, just

like Paul he looked, which almost surprised me; the same tall, noble figure, bearing the same secret of mastery and influence, that had mesmerised me from the first. He came straight on, but he did not see us. Then Marcelle went to meet him, and touched him.

Paul looked up, and glanced beyond her to George. "You were right," he said in a low voice, "you understood them. *Ah, i miei complimenti,—i miei complimenti profondi*"—(his voice and bow were intended to mimic the Cardinal) "on your greater knowledge of human nature. Miss Fairfax, you will find a letter that I have just written to you, it is the truth, and I can add no more. *Oui*, Marcelle," he went on, turning towards his sister, "*c'est fini*, I have been into that temple for the last time, the dream of my life is shattered. I wonder how it ever seemed real. And yet," he said, looking up at the great façade above us, "do I wonder? It is very impressive, it holds together by a great logic of construction. Looking, as I was looking, for some guiding star in the darkness for this human race, was it wonderful that I was deceived? And such lights burning within it, round that Confession of the Apostles, such stories of heroism, such food for great and little. It was a wonderful dream. No, I don't wonder. It has been hard to forgo it. It was natural to try to shut one's eyes to the lying, the corruption, the tyranny, the cruelty; hard to realise that the majesty and the dignity were merely the last lines of human semblance in a corpse. I have been in there for the last time, Marcelle. Now I go, no longer to seek, for there is nothing to be found; I go away to endure. Come with me, Marcelle, we will shake the dust from off our feet, and we will go; we have each other left, and so we cannot be quite unhappy. Come, say good-bye to them, but come with me."

"Paul, if I come now,—and I will come now,—you must not mistake me. I come, but I come as I will live and die, a Catholic."

She had her beautiful face turned up to him, with a love and a yearning that surely it was impossible to resist.

"No," he said, "we have always spoken the naked truth to each other—you must choose between me and that. It would be hollow and insincere for us to be together otherwise. You must choose, Marcelle."

"Paul, if I give up my faith to go with you now, *you* may still be saved, but we shall never be together in heaven."

I don't think he had any serious fear of losing her, but his voice trembled a little.

"Marcelle, do not be sophistical or dreamy at this moment. Come with me," he held out both hands to her, and he seemed to me to be a great lone, moral desert, empty and echoless, crying out to her for mercy.

She staggered for a moment as if she would fall, and then blindly moved away from him. He paused as if dazed, and then turned, and passed down the steps. I stood motionless. He passed by the obelisk. Then he was lost to my sight among the moving figures on the piazza. I looked round. George was holding open the heavy door, and Marcelle had disappeared. I went in, and slowly followed the others up the vast building. I was intensely conscious of all about me, as if the nerves of perception were naked in a new way. Photographed on my whole consciousness was that figure, walking away out of our lives, out of the Church; and some voice sang to me in a solemn chant, "*In exitu Israel de Egypto*". Was it some fiend that mocked me? Did it mean that Paul's soul was freed from bondage, or that my own soul was set free? But it was only one note, and I hardly noticed it till it came back to me afterwards. For the rest, I moved as in a great drama. Everything seemed to have started into life, the cherubs bigger than giants that held out the holy water stoup, the dead "Master of Life" by Michael Angelo, the huge pseudo-classical statue of the

sweet and simple Philip Neri, the bronze statue of the fisherman Pontiff, all were awake and aware of Paul's figure walking away across the piazza. And then, as attendants about the door of the presence chamber, they were all hushed as I passed into the presence. Black in the golden light from beyond rose the twisted pillars of the high altar, while crowding below, hundreds of lamps burned in a wonderful awestruck stillness above the Confession of Peter and of Paul. As I came within the circle of that atmosphere, I knew the climate, the climate of faith and hope and love, the spot on earth where more men and women and children have prayed with their whole hearts and souls than on any other. How many have knelt there as we knelt that day, verily with broken hearts! I had walked on that endless marble floor in the strange consciousness of the dramatic element of the struggle between the Church of all ages, and yet another instance of the revolt of "the wild, living intellect of man!" I could not analyse it, but I was passionately aware of the intense vitality of the moment.

But as I came within the arc of the lights about the tombs, my heart beat again, my human love cried out in agony. I saw Marcelle crouched against the marble railing, and George beyond, as still and straight as a carved figure on a tombstone. Then I knelt a little apart, and pressed my forehead against the marble.

Thus we spent two hours, two hours of strangest and fullest experience, and how hard to speak of what that was! How easy to chronicle doubt, pain, revolt, submission, struggle, failure or victory. But it is hard to tell the secrets that eye will never see, ear can never hear, tongue can never speak—because eye, ear and tongue were not made for these things. God framed them in frailty as mere sensual servants that may chatter only of things they can know, and then their foolish masters think to see with these eyes, hear with these

ears, and, strangest of all, to relate with these tongues the secrets of the Spirit.

I was as ever conscious, as I knelt at that tomb, rather of the whole world-wide Church than of Rome, for that is part of the subtle mystery of St. Peter's. In every cathedral, every convent and chapel, in lone desert places and crowded cities, hearts long to be at St. Peter's. And lo! when you are there, you are free of any one space, and you wander in the whole. Your individual life, your special sorrows, your agony for others, somehow blend in the vast whole, and the tears are wiped from all eyes, not only yours, and inexpressible consolation is given to all hearts, pardon held out to all penitents. As you find comfort, the self that needed it has been lost; as you humble your mind, it has vanished in a song of triumph. As you submit to the human rule, and it was hard perhaps to do so, you have become yourself part of the triumph, not as a captive, but as a conqueror. You sought to subdue the lifting of a mind that seemed to see further than the minds of those about you, and you and they together are lost in the light of a new and vaster knowledge. How unreasoning, how foolish, how feminine this may seem, but, oh! my God, how overwhelmingly true it was! Will you believe all else a poor little creature has to say of its experiences, and doubt of this?

But what of afterwards? What of the testimony of your life, if you were taken behind the cloud, and heard that which no man could utter? Ah me, there it is! It was good for us to be there, but we had to come away, and there was confusion at the foot of the mount. But do you think that Peter did not believe in the vision of Thabor when he warmed his hands at the fire, and denied his Master? The unutterable weakness of man whispers its *mea culpa* amid all the glories of Peter's tomb. You can hear it amid the silent thunders of the dome, or when the silver trumpets sing there of heaven's secrets.

For, after all, the tomb is that of an apostate, and the highest state of man is to be forgiven.

It was dim and dusky as we drove away in silence. Never had the great masses of the basilica looked more mighty. The defects were softened by the dusk, only the huge grandeur of the outlines struck the eye. To the west, the faint red light glimmered through the mighty pillars of the colonnade; we passed close by the obelisk that had been bathed in the blood of the martyrs. It had stood in the circus of Nero. Now it bore a cross. Where had Paul gone? Whither was he going? In the whole of this vast world, he would never reach a spot unshadowed by that cross.

X.

I WENT to hear Mass at the church in the piazza on the following morning, and then ordered coffee to be brought to my own room. Miss Mills was taking a long rest. There was a sense of lull, of desolate quiet, of enforced stillness. Miss Mills had put Marcelle to bed the night before. Marcelle had not wanted me, but she had suffered the little old weeping woman, who could not understand, and who still thought that whatever Paul had done was somebody else's mistake, not his own. She had told Miss Mills that she would rather be quite alone to-day, and had sent me much love, and I was not hurt. I only knew that it was better so. I yearned to help her, but we could not meet without speaking, and we could not speak yet. Nor could I yet show her Paul's letter to me. I looked at it again. I put it down on the table before me as I have it now. I was almost afraid,—even the form of the handwriting gave me a sort of fear. I read it once more while I was waiting for my coffee :—

“DEAR MISS FAIRFAX,

“I think that before you read this you will know that I am going away, out of the Church, out of your life, out of my own past. I shall shock you immeasurably, and for this I grieve. That I gain truth, instead of falsehood, liberty after bondage, I neither grieve nor rejoice; mere disillusion can never be happiness. I have nothing with which to replace what is lost and can never be regained. Whose fault is it?

Who's to blame? I am driven out immediately by lying, deceit, corruption, hypocrisy. But in proving to me that I have made the mistake of attributing Divine authority to a merely worn-out phase of human thought, these *canailles* of officials have only brought a little sooner what was bound to come.

"Am I illogical in wishing for you, dear little friend, that you may never lose your trust in the Church? As long as pure souls such as yours can find rest and sustenance in the old-world superstitions, I would not wish you to lose them.

"You will know that I cannot ask you to go with me after the judgment, and under the ban of Caiphas, even if you would be willing to do so. But I thank you now from my heart for what is beyond thanks. Unblinded by any romantic passion, you offered me, of your own free will, your pure and holy affection. You were ready to make me the human centre of your scheme of duty. You were loyal when I was trying, firm yet intensely gentle in carrying out what you had undertaken. You let me read in the crystal clearness of your heart. If there be a God, I thank Him for my knowledge of that heart, and I thank Him that I have made on it no deeper impression. Meanwhile, for myself I think of those lines of Browning's we have often read together:—

All my days I shall go softlier, sadlier
For that dream's sake.

However much you may blame me, and whatever in future they may make you believe of me, never regret that you did for some time lighten and comfort the existence of one who can no longer call himself your friend, but whom neither you nor others can ever cease to make your well-wisher.

"PAUL D'ETRANGES."

After the death of a friend, have you not found that some day or days spent with him years before, are far more vivid than any that came near the end? Sickness, dulness, the querulousness which made him not himself have passed away, and he is to you the radiant personality of the past. So with Paul, the bitter unreason, the dark, ugly obstinacy, the intolerable egotism, the injustice he had shown in those last days were a moral, mortal sickness. Now it was over. He had gone out of my life; there were no bitter words, no yielding to flatterers, no unconscious tyranny towards myself. My bonds no longer galled me, and he had written to me like his old first self. That one note of a singing of my freedom in my ears the day before, "*In exitu Israel de Egypto*," had not echoed any more. This letter now revealed the fact, that in his stormy, dark nature, capable in an unenglish way of being given up in some mysterious sense to evil, to hatred, to unjust scorns, he had formed a niche for me. Only a niche;—for his sister had held the altar of his heart; only a niche, high up in his fancy, in fact, almost out of sight. It was not much, certainly, yet the quality of what he had had to give was fine, and I recognised that in writing those words to me he had felt the reawakening of some element, not bitter, nor revengeful. He had for the moment felt and spoken like the Paul of last year.

And I wept for that old Paul, wept for the Paul who had put those gentle fingers on my head, who had knelt by me at that study table, in the little house among the moors, when he told me that I was never to let him and his ideals interfere with my own life and my own work.

I felt humbled at Paul's praise, terribly humbled. A sense of my own failure towards him was full upon me. Had I done rightly in taking upon me that curious relationship I had had with him? A thing that for weeks had been shadowy, unreal, almost forgotten by himself, and yet that had existed. If I had refused that tie, if I had listened to

my mother, might not Paul have found somebody else who might have saved him? In my vanity, in my impatience to be living a full life, in my unwillingness to lose the friendship of the other two, I had undertaken a vocation that was not mine. I did not know then, I do not know now, if those terrible thoughts were true. I can only, now as then, banish them as unprofitable and barren, and close my lips with the prayer of another troubled spirit in its musing:—

The best of what we do and are
Just God forgive.

Evidently my coffee had been forgotten, and I was feeling very faint by the time I had ordered it again, and waited another twenty minutes. When at last it came, there was a letter on the tray addressed in Marcelle's handwriting. As I read it, I broke down into a flood of tears, which was in reality a little weak of me. No real change had come about, only Marcelle had gone to lodge at a convent; she thought it best to go at once, as she did not want to see anybody, and she would like it to be supposed by their acquaintance that she had left Rome with Paul. She hoped that Paul would take no immediate public action, but she had heard nothing from him. "I did not want to disturb you when I left the hotel at five o'clock this morning, dearest Lisa, and indeed, I do not feel equal to talking to you to-day. I hope you will come to me to-morrow afternoon. I will tell you briefly now what I am inclined to think our best plan. I think George should leave Rome at once, and I know this is his own opinion. Of course, in the public eye, what women do matters less, but I think it would be wisest for you and Miss Mills to get home as soon as possible. I think the sooner we are all forgotten here the better. I am afraid of cruel and insolent things being said which will provoke violence. Do not mistake me, I have no hope, and I am not sure that my wishes are more than the irritable,

nervous longing to arrange details that I have often seen in near relations after a death—judge of them as you think fit. I thought of coming with you to Paris, and meeting my mother there, but I have decided now to stay here until I hear from Paul. Come to me to-morrow. God bless you Lisa.”

I wept and wept inconsolably, for to me that letter was almost as complete a good-bye as Paul’s, although an unconscious one. It threw back my life out of hers and out of George’s completely. It was the true end. I was bitterly, terribly hurt for a moment, and then personal bitterness was lost in an overwhelming sense of the sadness of all our four lives. Then there surged up again that terrible thought of my own future years. Had I ever lived at all before I knew those three? Then, had it all been the merest waking dream? Had I been led by such sunlit pastures merely to teach me the nothingness of the purest earthly friendship? I looked at the two letters lying side by side. I see them now on the little wooden table by the untouched coffee, with the great likeness between the handwriting of brother and sister, master and pupil, both large and yet scholarly. Yes, those were their farewells, lying side by side. There was only the third note missing. George’s good-bye must be laid by theirs.

Then a sharper, more rending pain seized my heart. I was becoming hysterical. I made myself take the coffee and bread, and then I turned and scolded my weakness. There were thoughts I would not allow myself, a luxury of grief I would not have. It was only selfishness that coloured my view of the other two. It was selfishness that made me think that George could never fill Paul’s place to Marcelle; it was gross vanity that prompted other thoughts. No, it was weakness, exhaustion, the long, long strain of anxiety, the need of my mother, the—I got up, half-stifled and pushed the hair back from my face. Yes, I must go away—go away

at once, travel days and nights alone with Miss Mills, go home, help to arrange Mary's marriage, and then? Then I should settle down with Miss Mills in the old home.

I seemed to see myself sitting again—in a few weeks—on the bench in the wood, in the glorious May weather, my life over, and yet so young. Then the bird rose up in the blue sky and sang to me as he sang when I was fifteen—*"Loyale je serai durant ma vie"*.

That was ten years ago. I should be twenty-four in a few days. Had my bird taught me any lasting lesson? Yes, in my awful trouble there was but one consolation, I had been loyal to truth and to Marcelle. There was no shame in thinking of Marcelle and George together. I had overcome at least that temptation, and if it arose now at the moment of our parting, I could fight it once more; and if it were stubborn, why I was going away from them both, and it should be buried deep—deep in the earth before I saw them again.

I thank that bird now as heartily as I thanked it at that moment.

Then I went to Miss Mills, and we settled to leave Rome on the following night. Meanwhile, we should need all and more than all our wits and our time to make ready for our journey. I sent Mr. Sutcliffe, by messenger, Marcelle's letter, and a note telling him that Miss Mills and I had decided to take her advice and leave Rome at once—on the evening of the next day.

I heard from Mr. Sutcliffe a few hours later, saying that he entirely approved, and that he should make a great effort to persuade Marcelle to travel with us. But I felt convinced that he would not succeed.

XI.

My packing was finished sooner than I had thought possible. I was to see Marcelle a little before the *Ave Maria*, and I had the last afternoon in Rome to myself. I jumped into one of the little carriages always standing in front of the Minerva Hotel, and told the man to drive to the Pincio Gardens.

I had prayed earnestly that morning for strength to face the future, and I had been calmer since then. I could think peacefully and quietly now of Marcelle and George. I felt sure of what would happen. I knew how he would help her to bear her sorrow bravely, and would strengthen her hopes for Paul, even if those hopes were sorely tried. George and Marcelle were too good, too noble to be unhappy in the ordinary sense of the word. He might have a hard task, and need long-suffering patience before he took Paul's place for her, but in the end he would succeed. Then being convinced of all being well in the true sense for them, I was able to think more calmly of myself. Yet it was truly an awful, an intense loneliness that lay before me. So completely should I be left alone, for as the union of the other two would grow into completeness, so my heart would become a superfluity for them, and my mind was no more to be occupied and dominated by Paul.

I do not think there was a weak self-pity in my heart, as I drove up the hill to take my last view of Rome from the Pincio Gardens. It was too simple a desolation for much

reflective thought. My life with Miss Mills lay before me, grey, shrunken, utterly narrow; no work, no interest, no companionship; no one any more who would understand what I had thought and felt and suffered in and through Paul. Marcelle and George must go out of my life for many years. I had been too close to them; they must be free. I was convinced that they must be quite free of the past, if they were to grow to the completeness of a happy marriage. For their own sakes, and still more for my own sake, I should be better away. Years hence perhaps I could be with them again, and I drew a sad comfort from the thought.

"Some future day when what is now is not," Clough's lines rang in my head, as I stopped the carriage and got out.

Shall we indeed,—ye winds and waters say!
Meet yet again upon some future day?

I leant on the low wall, and looked without seeing it at the great familiar view. I wondered a little why God did not comfort me more. Surely such were the hours of utter desolation in which His presence would be felt. "I will not leave thee desolate." But I was very desolate, and no whisper came to my heart. I leant on the wall, my head bent on my hands, and I must have looked a miserable figure enough. I was always thin, and I had grown much thinner during the winter. I was worn out. The horror of Paul's apostasy was a dark cloud round about me, and my own life was all sorrowful. I can imagine that it must have been a desolate little figure with a very pale face, clinging to the wall, unnoticed by the gay crowd driving on the Pincio.

Some instinct made me look up suddenly, and before my tearful face had managed to conceal any of my sadness, I saw George Sutcliffe coming towards me. There was a

great degree of kindness expressed in the rugged features, a great force of feeling, of goodness, shown in the whole look and bearing.

I felt his strong grasp on my little thin fingers (I had forgotten my gloves), and I looked away from him.

"I came to see the view," I could not get out the rest of my words. I failed to say "for the last time". I tried to pull myself together. Fixing my eyes on the great dominant dome, trying to see the outline undimmed, by tears, I managed to say, "Marcelle has just sent me a second note, asking me to go and say good-bye this evening. I had felt certain she would not come with us to Paris. But her note has greatly comforted me. There is a great peace in it. She will be all right now."

I turned then and smiled on him, and the sympathy and joy I wanted to show him were quite true, quite simple. I took comfort from that thought. This time he did not look at me. He was leaning over the wall, and for a moment he leant his head between his hands in a way he often did.

"I knew she would be all right," he said quietly.

Yes, of course he knew, I thought, how could he fail to know?

We were silent for several minutes, and then he said:—

"I saw her this morning, and we had a long talk."

I waited.

He leant further over the wall, and his head sank a little lower.

"She has asked me to tell you now what I think you must know already," he paused, and I felt an unreasoning alarm of some new blow, and the trembling of all my over-tried nerves. "I think you must have known that Marcelle broke off our engagement about six weeks ago."

"Oh, no, no!" I exclaimed in horror. "I had no idea, I am utterly astonished—oh, I am sorry."

"I thought you must have seen it," he said in a low,

puzzled tone, that conveyed to me a sudden sense of his great sadness. "Marcelle was right then. I had an idea that you saw everything. She said you did not. But surely now you know when it was? Look back and see."

I made a great effort, and went backwards over the last weeks. In those weeks she had been very gentle and kindly in her bearing towards everybody; she had spoken too very sweetly of George, more than once. The last time she had spoken with any irritation to him, or about him to me, had been——

"Oh!" I cried, in a sudden gleam of perception, "was it when we came out of the catacombs—when you two walked between the irises in the sunset?"

"You came towards us," his voice trembled as he spoke. "I saw you standing in the middle of the little garden as we turned round. It was at the moment when Marcelle had taken my hands in hers, and had said *Pax Tecum*. That was her Amen."

I could have said the words for him. I knew them so exactly. No, I had guessed nothing, seen nothing, only I knew now what it was that Marcelle had left in that catacomb, as she had come towards me, with her light lifted high. She had seemed to me the image of a Roman maiden coming to bury her dead, and longing to consummate her own sacrifice. I knew now that it was youth and joy and love, and the hopes of a woman's life that Marcelle had buried that day. She had come out of that catacomb to live for Paul alone, and now Paul——

"She told me very simply and quietly," George began again, "that she saw Paul wanted her entirely, that he could not do without her, and that it would be unjust and unfair to me to become my wife. She said that she ought never to have accepted me, as she could not give me the first place. She was wonderfully sweet and gentle; all storms had passed. I think I never saw her so beautiful,

so of one piece. She asked my pardon, and with her terrible candour she went over the past months. She knew that though she had taken me, so she said, for her own sake, she had used me for Paul. It was an injustice, she said, and God does not bless injustice. I could not tell her how little I thought of all that, nor could I say that I knew she had never been independent of Paul. She said that she felt in honour and truth obliged to tell me without further delay. But she also thought it best not to upset Paul, and she did not wish you or anybody to know of her decision while Paul still believed us to be engaged. We had no hesitation between us on the point that he must be our chief, our only object, until we could leave Rome. 'I had hoped, till lately,' she went on, 'that you and Paul would be so united, so much as brothers that it might have been possible; now I know that you are going different ways; you cannot walk in the same path.'"

"But you should not have listened to her," I cried, "how could you let her do it? It was just the old twist, the old mistake at Peak Hall. It is the mania of self-sacrifice. But now, now he has given her up, he has gone now, you can get it right."

"No," he said, "when the crisis came two days ago, it was as I expected, she did not need me in the least. Paul had broken from her, but she was still his. You said once," his voice failed for a moment, "that the only thing she would not do for Paul would be to commit sin for his sake. You were right. When she had to choose between him and her faith, you and I saw her turn her back on him and walk into St. Peter's. Even then your words came back to me: 'Better part here than part at heaven's gate'. I knew she was not choosing anything but heaven that day, besides, how could it ever be right," his voice sounded like a growl, "Lisa, when the simple truth was that she had never loved me? I had found it out before that. I knew it had been a

huge mistake. I thought you must have seen it too. From the moment she had accepted me she could not bear it, she clung to Paul. I knew it, but I was ready to take the second place. I schooled myself to it. I think I could have gone through with it. I thought I was needed, and could be useful. I looked it all in the face. I was ready to serve the appointed years of my life. She would have lived for Paul, and I for her. I knew very, very soon, even before we left England, that in all simplicity and truth we had both made a huge mistake. Long after—and I went through a great deal of suffering meanwhile—long after, when those strong hands held mine that evening in the Campagna, and the great dark eyes let her soul speak, and her white forehead shone as with an aureole, and she seemed sealed with the sign of her God on her forehead, I knew that we had done each other no manner of hurt. I went away in the peace she had given, resolved to serve her in any way I might with no bitterness of shame, and yet much humbled, humbled because in my heart of hearts I knew I had not been worthy to love her, humbled because I knew that I was glad that she did not need me. And you, you never even suspected?"

"Oh, never, never."

"You were too busy with your own trials," he said. "You had made your great mistake too, Lisa—a greater mistake but a nobler one, for you knew, I know you knew, that you did not love him. Marcelle has told me much to-day, but I knew it all along." He was silent. "Forgive me, for we have been thrown into a strange intimacy we four, and the end of our curious quadrille in life has come; forgive me, Lisa, but may I grieve with you, if I am wrong and Marcelle is wrong, and he has caused you the deepest suffering a man can give a woman?" His voice shook.

"No, no," I murmured inarticulately.

"What did you say? I could not hear, please forgive me. I do beg your pardon."

"I don't think you ought to ask me," I said, trying to speak firmly, "but I said 'no,' and it is 'no,' he has not."

"Thank God!" said George Sutcliffe. He covered his face with his hands, and we were silent.

At length he began abruptly, almost roughly: "But why do you say that I ought not to ask you? Surely you cannot think that all we have been through together, since we have known Paul and Marcelle d'Etranges, is to be a thing of the past? Surely, having known you as I have, and been so near you, while you suffered and endured, I have some right, some claim of friendship. I know I have been selfish, we were all selfish to you, have all taken so much from you, and given you nothing in return; but Lisa, you cannot think I have not felt for you in your trials these long months since August? Looking back I can see you so plainly throughout, your gentleness, your kindness, your loyalty. Don't say now that I have no right, if it is only the right of our common devotion to Paul, our discipleship to our lost leader, to take an interest in your life, to ask questions. And you are going away to-night. Am I to let you go without any talk over these things? And whom will you speak to? Will Miss Mills understand what we have felt and thought and suffered these months in Rome? And whom else have you? After all, Marcelle has Paul still. She can never be utterly lonely while her other self is living. He will come back to her, she will save him. God will accept her bargain, and somehow, somewhere, she will save Paul. But you are going away with Miss Mills—having had your brain, your soul, your heart racked and strained. You will never say a word that will be understood, you will never read a book that you can speak of. You will be under a cloud with old-fashioned Catholics, and you will have no one to comfort you, no one to be with, no one on whom to spend your exquisite kindness, no one to think for and to suffer for but Miss Mills. Lisa, don't reject my friendship—we shall both be very lonely

after this. All the time I knew that we had made mistakes, you and I, at least I was seeing you, talking to you sometimes. I was kept straight and steady by your example. You see we cannot really afford to do without our friendship, you and I. It is impossible to go back to ordinary life in England, and be as if all this had never been. Once before, when my life was wrapt up in that of two others, they died, and I found life hard. But it was nothing to this. Surely you did not mean, when you said just now that I had no right, that you are going to cut away our friendship, to keep me at arm's length? You have hardly spoken to-day, you are hard and silent. I know you are capable of marking out a line of conduct for yourself and sticking to it in an iron way, but if you are doing this, you are truly and really making a great mistake. After all, all I want now is just to know that you do allow that we are friends, that I may come and see you in England, that you will pray for me, and that we may count on each other to think alike, while we pray for Paul and Marcelle. Lisa, do look up and let me know this much."

He had been talking for a long time, and every word he said made me more utterly dumb. I was longing, striving to say something, simple, kindly, affectionate, that would calm and pacify him. I wanted to look him in the face and betray nothing. I wanted to be able to give him the right hand of fellowship, and to stifle all consciousness of my own thoughts, my own feelings.

"Marcelle looks to our friendship as a comfort," he went on. "She said this morning that she would picture us talking kindly of Paul. 'If there is nobody else, there will always be you two who will understand, and talk it all over in England, and pray for us. Whatever happens I shall think of that. Tell Lisa I shall count on that.'"

And those last words made it more and more impossible for me; the tears were forcing their way through my fingers, and dropping on the wall.

“ Lisa,” he said very gently.

I slowly raised my head and turned towards him. I held out my hand to him, and tried to speak. As he took my hand he saw that I could say nothing, and he also saw why. There was that in our eyes that we could not veil over. A look of surprise and awe came as a flash of light across the other emotions on his rugged face, and he turned away in silence, and left me alone : but never so little alone in my whole life before.

XII.

I stood that evening with Marcelle in the loggia of the Convent of M——. Down far below us was the once famous garden, in which golden oranges gleamed above the silver grey of the yuccas and the spiked aloes. Away on our right the highest peaks of the ruined Palatine stood out darkly against the flush of the afternoon sky, and further on, blue in the distant west, ever dominant, rose the dome of St. Peter's. Marcelle was leaning against the wall under the great brick arch of the unglazed window, her feet on the uneven tiles of the old pavement; her whole bearing, even her long black silk skirt and the lace veil over her head held for me a new and pathetic dignity. As she spoke she threw back her veil, and I saw one white lock of hair in the midst of the black.

I think that at first meeting we were quite silent. I think we stood with hands clasped, looking into each other's faces. I suppose we did say some few things about my journey to Paris that night, and then we made some little joke about Miss Mills' luggage. It broke the barrier of silence, and after a moment of evident effort Marcelle spoke. I do not think I have forgotten one word of what she said.

"Lisa, I want to tell you a story," and she leant her elbows on the deep embrasure of the window. "Unless I tell the whole, you will think that from pride and kindness I am not telling the truth. For you saw quite well, quite plainly, that I loved George. How it came about I cannot

analyse. He was big, strong, and delightfully ugly. I was much alone—Paul,” she stopped a moment, “was too much above me to be quite a companion. I had seen men for some time who were not gentlemen altogether—but *tiens*, why try to explain? What more simple? And he, Lisa, dear,” and she smiled a little,—“allow so much to my vanity which is not over-nourished just now—he admired, and for a time loved me. What was hard was that he never trusted me. No, don’t defend him, it was not his fault. I never gave up myself to him, never truly put him first. Perhaps my saying that comes too from the poor old vanity. Anyhow, I know it was because I was not his, and was not meant to be his, that he never quite rested on me. Indeed, from the first he quite unconsciously rested on you. It might seem unfortunate that he had got me in his fancy before you came to Peak Hall. If he had recognised at once that you were meant for each other, *bien des larmes* would have been saved. But why say that you believe in Providence and not do so? I think I see how it all was. To take my selfish self first, I had just to learn so much of human love that I could live my life without it *de m’en passer*. I might otherwise,” her eyes were raised to the light, and I turned from the sky to catch its reflection on her face, “*autrement*, I might have thought too much of it, I might have made for myself an Eden of fancy that would have chained me. Now do not smile, Lisa, I have loved a man as women love, and I have lost him, and I am glad—and all the gladder that he does not go away sad. From the beginning I put Paul first, and that was not just. And yet it was a dim perception of my true vocation. I looked on Paul as duty, George as pleasure, as recreation. It was very selfish. I was selfish too in wanting to give you to Paul—poor little Lisa, striving so loyally to follow him.”

“I could not help it,” I interrupted.

“You were straining at what you were not meant to be.

Don't think, dear, that those were lost efforts. It is not nothing now that he knew so closely a pure, true heart ; he said to me lately, that come what might, he would always have gained by that knowledge. I did not mean to wrong you, and if that were a secret sin, God who made me, and understands what I can never understand, will forgive. But to-night, I want to thank you, Lisa, for your long, loyal patience, that would have been for life, if need were. I cannot tell the first moment when I recognised a change in you and George. I had a suspicion that after your mother's death you wanted to avoid Paul, and that for some reason your engagement burdened you in a new way. Then on the journey from England to Rome it struck me, I suppose because you were among foreigners, how immensely you and George suited each other. I tried not to think of it. The weeks in Rome that followed brought before me the differences between George and Paul. I began to see that I must choose to live for one or the other. Could I doubt which needed me most ? I remember one day when George had been explaining to you some view of history in which I could not agree, that it came upon me in a flash that he might not need me at all. It was hard to bear, and yet it came as light which I could not reject. After that, I went through some dark days of sad and bitter thoughts of which I am now heartily ashamed. I could not be simple, could not be at my ease with George. I was really happier when all was over, even when it still hurt me to realise that what had come to an end in the garden above the catacomb ought never to have been."

She was quite silent for a few moments, as we watched the pink gaining on the blue of the heavens.

"Ought I, do you think ?" she went on, half-speaking to herself, though the words were addressed to me. "Ought I to have allowed things to go on in silence as long as I did after that, ought I to have accepted George's loyalty and yours ? Sometimes I think that I ought at once to have

told Paul that I had set George free, and have asked Paul to set you free also. But I let it go on for Paul's sake, Lisa, and because I instinctively knew that a crisis must arise of itself, and that we three were watchers at a death-bed! I clung to you and George as my only friends."

After I had tried to tell her how thankful I was that she had not sent me away before the end, we fell into a longer silence than before.

At last the words came almost in a cry of bodily pain. "Lisa, did you ever think, did it ever enter into your mind that after God had taught me the secret Rome held for me, and that my life was to be for Paul only, God would Himself take Paul from me?" She did not cry, she did not stir, her head was bent upon her hands. "Yes, the love of lovers may be sweet, but I could do without it. Don't fear or regret for me any one thing in that, Lisa. But Lisa, where is Paul, what is he doing? He will never want me again, and how can I live without Paul!"

The rosy flush was dying out of the sky, a fresh but mournful little breeze seemed to sigh from out the ruins on the Palatine, and the great dome bore a dimmer outline.

I knew that Marcelle said so much now, because she would not see me again for years, and that she would rather speak out once more with our old, dear freedom. But in what could I comfort her? What could I say to her in her terrible desolation? She answered her own questioning.

"The Pope said to me what the Bishop said long ago: 'Commit thy way unto the Lord, and He will bring it to pass'; I know He will, Lisa, though I cannot see how. I know, that as surely as He will lead you, my dear friend, He will lead me. In distant countries, happy or desolate, we will go the same way, in peace, bitter or sweet, in light or in darkness. I am not really afraid. I am only just beginning to really trust. Why is it that in all God's doings with us there is always the sense of newness, as if we became

different as we knew more of Him. Then let it be our comfort, Lisa, to look quietly forward through perhaps many years, perhaps through all our lives, to knowing our new selves, you and me made perfect. We may dare to say it, may we not? This is the good-bye of the old Marcelle and Lisa, who have dearly loved, and who will dearly love each other; and it is the *au revoir* to the new Lisa and Marcelle (only we shall be called by new names then), when all tears are wiped away, and we recognise each other in the light before the throne."

XIII.

AND afterwards, since that evening twenty years ago when I parted from Marcelle? It was a true instinct that told her we had come to the parting of the ways, and characteristic of her candour in facing facts and even possibilities. It was not only that she felt as I had felt, when I supposed that she and George would go away out of my life, when I thought that the break with the other two must be complete. It was also because the great factor of her life was Paul, and she knew that the breach between us and Paul must widen. Almost immediately after I had parted from her, there followed a series of reviews in England, Germany, France and America, attacking the Vatican with the fiercest invective, with different degrees of violence, more or less of untruth, but all, as it seemed to George, full of gross misrepresentation. Evidently, they had been prepared beforehand, their number, their length, their elaborateness, precluded the idea of a spontaneous outburst. Besides, of a good half-dozen I could not mistake the style; under the different pseudonyms, I knew, I could not mistake, Paul's voice. I read the first as I travelled home with Miss Mills. George was to follow in a few days; I read one of the last of the set two years afterwards, in the Highlands of Scotland, whither we went shortly after our marriage.

It was then that George, with heart-searchings and much suffering, wrote a short paper, a brief narrative of Paul's relations with the Holy Office, and of the situation as he had

seen and judged it himself. It was the first bit of work we did together, but it was utterly painful, so painful that we never spoke of it when once it was done with. There followed an anonymous answer, unmistakably Paul's own. It was a sketch of George's position throughout, unnamed but obvious. It was the picture of an ideal trimmer who made his conscience the excuse for siding with the most powerful. The trimmer was described as being in constant uncertainty as to which was the greatest power, the men of intellect and science who ruled the lower world, or the old majestic time-honoured ecclesiastical authorities. He decides to throw in his cause with the latter, first, because by birth and family it chances that it is for him the more profitable; and secondly, because his kind of Sunday-school-boy smug little conscience is more comfortable among pious fictions than it would be if it really clung to the truth.

That such a character may prove capable of the deepest treasons, the most painful personal treachery to man or woman, was the theme of the last pages. I saw quicker than George did the sting of the last phrase. In the "or woman" lay the sting. And I have known since that I was right. Paul in all his bitterness was most bitter as to what he persistently called George's desertion of Marcelle. He had not the least doubt but that she would marry George. I believe that the first time in which he alluded to her was in answer to a letter from the faithful and heart-broken Father Duly, when he said that he did not wish to know the date of his sister's marriage. Unfortunately, when Father Duly wrote, and told him that Marcelle had broken off her engagement to George, he had just heard a rumour that George was engaged to me. I have always imagined, but never known, what he wrote to Father Duly about Marcelle not having found a refuge with George. I had hoped then, that Paul would have in some way turned to Marcelle, but he did not.

As years passed, the shadow of Paul grew less. We heard little of him. It seemed that his followers had melted away ; his vehemence had alienated those Catholics who sympathised with him, and thinkers outside the Church were not deeply interested in these ecclesiastical quarrels. We heard of his going to America, about a year after our parting. A little later, we knew that he had gone to the East, and I believe that he spent many years in India and China. Except on his own estates, which were left entirely in Marcelle's hands, he was forgotten.

One link with the past remained to me. Once a year, on the Assumption, I always received from Marcelle an illumination of the *Gaudeamus* Introit. I had, by an inspiration of the heart, had the same thought on the first Feast of the Assumption after we parted. Next year we exchanged them, and so, year by year, we kept and changed the cards. Fifteen years had passed, and about the end of August I got a *lettre de faire part*, the formal, printed announcement of Marcelle's death. The silence as to how and why the blow had fallen was intolerable. We could not intrude by any inquiry, even to find out if we might go to the funeral. How should I ask for pity in the fullest and the happiest of lives. But Marcelle, Marcelle ! God help us to be worthy of having known her.

As soon as our boys had gone to school after the holidays, we went abroad for the first time, and visited her grave.

We went to Paris, and George learnt from the family lawyer that Marcelle was buried at L'Epergne, a village on her brother's estates, about fifteen miles from Issot. After a long cross-country journey, and then a drive of twenty miles, we reached L'Epergne.

Marcelle had had a small and ugly château of her own, with high lead roofs, and a bare little garden, near the edge of a great forest, and in this she had lived. The door was opened to us by Jacques, the man-servant I had seen on my

first arrival at Peak Hall. He was old, and grey, and bent. At first he could hardly speak for weeping, but he kissed my hand, and made every sign of welcome he could. Nobody had been there since the funeral, which Marcelle's mother had been too ill to attend. Nothing, he said, was to be touched until Mme. la Comtesse was able to come. When we had got into the dark, stuffy house, Jacques opened the great shutters, and we could see the rooms in which Marcelle had passed her last five or six years. Our first impression was astonishment at the poverty-stricken look of the house. No cottage in our village at home was so bare of comfort. The paint on the woodwork had almost disappeared, the chimney-piece had sunk at one end. Two of the chairs were broken, and those which were safe to sit upon, were hard and cushionless. On the wall hung a magnificent picture of Paul, and, forgetting all else when his eye seemed to catch mine, I stood quite still. He was younger than the Paul who came to England, but what a dominant power there was even then in the face, and ah me! what promise! At last I heard George say to Jacques, "Did she see him again?"

Jacques shook his head. "He wrote her a letter this spring from India, which comforted her. It made some days of peace before the end."

George drew my arm into his.

Jacques was standing by a little writing-table in the window, on which lay a few letters, some opened, and a few that had come after there was no one to open them.

"Do you think," he said, pointing to one, "that Madame might take that?"

I drew near, and saw that in her own writing was written "for Lisa," while another was addressed to Dr. Dale.

"The Bishop came to see her three years ago," said Jacques, in accents of reproach—then hastily added, "*Je sais bien ce que c'est*—it is her photograph. In those days in the spring, before so much illness came into the village, she

went one day to Issot, and it was taken there by a man who belonged to this village. Then came the fever, and she was out day and night. Some got better, and some died, my old mother among them. Mademoiselle did not get it, but she was very tired, and she had been so long tried, and alone," and he added under his breath "and poor. They wanted her to go away, but she would not; you see Monsieur, there was so little money. I tried to write to Mme. de Pourcelles and I did it too late. Do you think," he said, appealing to us both, "that if I had written in time—?" George soothed and comforted him; should the poor old servant, the only one who had been faithful and devoted to the last, blame himself? Meanwhile, I opened the envelope, and looked at the last likeness of Marcelle, and I caught my breath. She was so terribly changed, so thin and wan, and so poorly dressed. I thought of the old enjoyment of wearing a peasant's clothes among the moors, and their fantastic setting to her rich full beauty, and then looked at this poorly dressed lady, with the sort of dowdy black garments of an old, old fashion that you may see in almost any convent, where ladies who have come down in the world board cheaply.

Where was the old carriage of the head? now it was a little bowed, and the hands were folded with something of the strange attitude of patience that I had known in Paul. But the eyes were not cast down, and out of them shone that peace which passeth all understanding.

Jacques was watching me, and it struck me that he was looking at my clothes, and at my rings in particular. Then he blushed, actually blushed, and a gleam of wounded pride came over his dark southern face.

"The poverty was our own doing," he said, and then looking at George, "Monsieur, it was in this way. When Monsieur le Comte first went away, he told the lawyers that everything was to be in the hands of Mademoiselle, his sister, only she was never to use land or money of his, in any way

for purposes of religion ; for matters of philanthropy she was to have a free hand, and so, milord, everybody on these estates had been well off, and well cared for, except,"—he could not go on. "Monsieur, not one church has suffered, not one lamp of the sanctuary has gone out, but for that it needed all our money, everything we had ; the piano went once, and ever so many things. Only the picture was left. You see, milord, the estates are very big, and there are many poor chapels in the forests, and in them all Mass is said constantly for the Count. Mme. la Comtesse never guessed the secret, and thought her shabby clothes meant a craze against the world ; she never came here or she must have known. Made-moiselle went to spend one month with her mother, in each autumn. People about here have even called her a miser."

We could not speak for some moments, and then George asked what would happen to the poor chapels now.

"It is in the will," he said, "but it is not enough," and he looked pathetically at George.

"I will see to it," he answered.

I left them, and went up to the bedroom. It was still more bare than the room below. There was a little hard, narrow bed on which she had died, with the priest, and Jacques, and his daughter kneeling by her. Above the bed hung a crucifix, and in a small black frame was the *Gaudeamus* Introit illuminated. We had just exchanged them for the last time before she died. I could not take that away, but I had the one she had first given me, and which also hung always at my bedside. As I knelt with my head buried on that low bedstead, my cowardly, earthly mind could think of nothing but the long, lonely days that had made up the lonely years. I had never feared, never dreamed anything like this. A wild revolt took possession of me, the bare boards, the worn blankets, the cracked water-pitcher, every detail pressed on my burning brain.

It wanted greater faith than mine to sing *Gaudeamus* in that room.

XIV.

I WAS to see Paul again once more, only once, and then he did not see me.

Six months later we went to Rome. I had been ill, and a dullness and apathy had come over me. It may have been bodily illness, but I think it may also have been my old enemy, the sense of a loss of faith. I could not, or I would not take Marcelle's death in the spirit of prayer. I did not wilfully revolt, but neither did I willingly accept it. I know now that it was the greatness of the grace offered to me that I did not accept. Busy about many things, too prosperous perhaps, and taking a good man's love as a matter of course, I was not fit for what Marcelle would have taught me. I mourned her fiercely and wilfully, mourned her beauty, her brightness, her youth, and refused to meet her glance from heaven. I did not want to give up my own world, and I could not bear to think that she had forgone it. I had never been restless, or tired of my home for twelve years, and no wonder. But now all ties seemed chains, and I felt odd repulsions and impatiences. I could not tell George, and I had up to then told him more than words are made to carry.

So, the children being well, we went abroad, and without discussion made our way to Rome. For myself, I was quickly disappointed. I had thought to revive in Rome old dreams, old aspirations, to renew almost unconsciously old self-denials.

But when I saw again the same sights, when the great

dome chained my eyes, and entering in, I knew again the golden, dim light of that immense atmosphere, and my tired feet trod on the desert of marble pavement, and the clustering, low lights in the far distance told me that they had shone forth with cheerfulness, these fifteen years, about the Confession of the Apostles, while I was away, the past faded. The frame was there, and the picture had been more vivid without it. I had thought that if I knelt again with my head touching the cold marble railing round the tomb of the Apostles, I should realise it all again. Again would Paul be walking away with the slant, long shadow of his tall, thin figure between the obelisk and the fountain—again Marcelle would be before me, taking refuge at the tomb, and George by her side. Again the light of her sacrifice would shine about me, and a strange understanding would be given me of the kinship in Christ, which Paul had rejected, wherein no man stands alone,—wherein the ruler and the ruled, the teacher and the taught, each takes his place for a brief moment in the great march-past of human story: all bound so closely together, and yet each seeing only from his own angle, and no man able to see the other's point of view; so individual and so inseparable, intolerant of bonds and hating solitude. All this I had once seen in the light of the great luminous paradox, that there is now "neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."

None of it came back to me alive—I knelt there without comfort or light, my mind wandering to distant England, and stupidly wondering whether the children might have caught cold, and seeing before me an habitual source of worry, a dangerous corner of the old oak staircase at home, and imagining my top-heavy boy slipping and falling, with his mother so terribly far away.

When George raised his head, and I saw that to him the past was indeed living, I felt irritated; and as we went slowly

down the basilica, and he touched my hand for a moment in a gesture of deepest sympathy, I knew that my thoughts were not as his.

We made our way very silently back to the hotel, and I concluded that the only thing I should be capable of enjoying in Rome was the perfect cooking of the table d'hôte. After luncheon I took an easy chair and a silly novel, and George went out alone. When he came back, and I smiled and asked him where he had been, I saw a change in his face. It was very grave, and yet some lines that I knew well seemed to have been smoothed away. The strong mouth was unsmiling, but under his dear, shaggy eyebrows there was a new light. He was a long time trying to tell me something, and leaving it, and then it came quite suddenly.

"Lisa, Paul is in Rome; he is a Dominican, he is to preach to-morrow in Our Lady Sopra Minerva."

I thought it was a rumour and a mistake. He came across and knelt by me, and put his strong arm round me and convinced me. And then I cried and cried—and at last, like a child I said, "If only Marcelle had lived".

George said nothing. A far-away look had come into his face, and I shivered.

"What more did you hear?" I asked.

"Oh, they say the silliest things! Rome is in one hubbub of chatter. Some of them say that he has had a sunstroke, others that he saw a miracle. Then some people say that he has been tricked into believing that the Pope accepts all his views now, and that they won't let him see anybody who would help to clear it up. Therefore, he is to preach one show sermon, and then be carried off to an out-of-the-way monastery in the hills. Other people say that his asceticism is appalling, and that the Pope has interfered to prevent his starving himself to death. But another story makes out that it is a political move on the part of the French Government, and one lot of course declare that he is a spy of the

Freemasons. Then the smug sanctimonious are gloating unpleasantly at his being caught and chained, and shown off for their benefit. But what does it all matter? I met Monsignor Frumont, and he and many others are too happy to speak. A few magpies don't matter at all. Frumont tells me that Paul started back from the East immediately after Marcelle's death, and spent a month quite alone in her house. He was then here in Rome for three months constantly in the churches, and then he joined the Dominicans. His preaching now, though as yet only a novice, is by his own wish and with special permission."

For fifteen years had we prayed together for Paul. For years I had dreamt of what might be, and now it was. But I was utterly sad and heavy. It was nerves no doubt, but I own now, that it was something typified by the arm-chair and the silly novel.

I can hardly believe the flatness of it all. Looking back, my state of mind seems quite incredible. I wonder if I disappointed George? I almost think I did. He had, that evening, the look I could imagine on the face of one who had been reprieved from a life sentence. I think he will wear that look as long as he lives.

At one moment I betrayed my discomfort in words.

"I don't see," I said, "how he (I could not say Paul yet) will fit in."

"What do you mean?" asked George.

"They will never understand him."

"Perhaps not."

"They will never quite believe in him."

"Many will."

"But not all. He is too strong a man to fit in easily. After all he has suffered and sacrificed, the people who ought to be too thankful to have him will only just tolerate him. George, I am afraid he will be horribly solitary."

"He always was; it was in his nature to be alone; and as

to his being feared and misunderstood, Lisa, so was the other Paul, but our Paul is not so sensitive. Perhaps he will never convince the Galatians that he is an Apostle, but he would not feel that half as much as St. Paul did. He is too strong for them to hurt him much or long. I grant you, he is too individual to find his own class, but he will always have some few who understand. And anyhow, like the other Paul, he will be able to do all things. Besides, Lisa, he is not young, perhaps he won't have to go on long."

"Not have to go on long," I whispered to myself. Could George, strong and prosperous, say that as a consolation? Why could I not be spiritual like him, like the other three? I turned fretfully from such comfort as that. Heaven forgive me!

Next day we sat side by side, half-hidden by a pillar, in the rich darkness of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva, a little way below the platform. It was one of those wide, red cloth things, with a tawdry gilt chair, and some of the untidy, childish smartness which at times the Italians delight in. It struck a false note in the perfect taste of the church. My eyes sought my old friend the Bishop in his tomb, in the austere beauty of the fourteenth century. He was still at rest, with the angels watching those slumbers, while our angels, Marcelle's and Paul's, George's and mine, had had far different watching.

The church was almost full, and all sorts of people were still coming in: students of all climes and nations, from the colleges, in troops; Italian ladies in twos and threes, in their delightfully exclusive black, with intensely white gloves; tourists of course in numbers, Americans who had caught rumours in the hotels, including, as they always do, some of the most comprehending of human beings and some of the least; stray French laymen, who looked as if they had come to scent out and pursue unorthodoxy. Then I could recognise some

typical Roman ecclesiastical faces, delighting in the spectacle of a triumph ; Monsignori of various nations, polished and half-smiling, each a known man ; ladies from the English Embassy, with the most astounding ignorance of what it was all about—then a sprinkling of smart young Italians, who moved with ease and the consciousness of a social event. Three French Sisters of Charity were there, as still as kneeling statues—who probably knew a little of Paul's story, and prayed much for him. Journalists had come to paragraph him for the London, and Paris, and Vienna papers, who would have done it equally truly if they had stayed at home. Poor men and women of course were there at their daily prayers, heeding nothing that was going on. I saw too an Oratorian, bred in distant Birmingham, in Newman's spirit, who had come from San Girolamo down the near street, even as St. Philip came, when he prayed for Savonarola. Then, almost lost to sight in the gloom of the sanctuary, the Cardinal Priest of Santa Maria Sopra Minerva was already kneeling, with strong stern head bent in prayer, seemingly the very embodiment of rule and power.

All these I recognised, but there were many more unknown to me than known. And what was also unknown to me, and I was hardly fit to recognise, was that hidden under the things I did see, were the hearts that rejoiced and the true fellowship of those to whom it had been given to understand.

The moments dragged on. I felt every nerve tingle with expectation and irritation. I suppose I was very pale, for I saw George look anxiously at me more than once. I think he felt intensely for me the publicity of this strange meeting. I was profoundly irritated by the comparison in my mind between this and a Roman triumph of old. Must they drag their captive before the eyes of the curious, the sight-seer, the evil thinker, the careless liver? And was this captive Paul? Was it really Paul who was to make a festa for the

pious? Paul! What did it mean? How could Paul, of all men, submit to this strange, public exhibition of himself. What had happened? What could it mean? What strange Satanic struggle had gone on in that lonely desert of a soul? What mystic anguish had he passed through in those long years in the East? I dared not think, but I was filled with a dumb misery. Was it that, worn and tired out by human sorrow for the loss of Marcelle, he had come, humbled and crushed, to prostrate himself where he had revolted? Paul would never do anything by halves. But were they worthy who held the yoke about his neck? Need he have done anything so extreme as to become the novice of such an order? I knew enough to picture to myself that novice's life—the status of a child, the company of young, unformed, rough men, who would feel him a bore and a thing out of place: the unwholesome hardness,—one big meal, and then long fasts; whereas Paul had eaten little, and never could take a large meal, or go long without food. How carefully Marcelle had seen to all that. Could his digestion be stronger now? My fancy fastened on the horrid, odd fishes in odder sauces that Italians use for abstinence days. Then could Paul live at all without any meat? And the cold? I could see those thin, transparent fingers that rested on my hair long ago, and that I had once kissed almost with awe, blue with cold and seared with chilblains. Ah, and those eyes that we had all tried to spare, how they would strain at his office-book in the stark, cold watches of the night. His office-book! what other book would he have? He would have just what they chose to give him. If he bore other things, could he bear to have that great, spacious, far-echoing intellect brought to wait upon the narrow knowledge of possibly quite little minds?

I was lost in bitter questions: then there was the faintest stir about me. I glanced up, and Paul stood before us. I buried my face in my hands. I could not look at him.

It was a great hush, and then a voice passed through the church, filling without strain the thronged darkness of the big building ; a voice so strong, clear and low, so entirely masterful and calm that it stilled every pulse of my being, and then I could look at Paul.

The friar's hood had fallen back, and the light of some candles was thrown upon the tall, spare figure in the white habit. I trembled from head to foot with a kind of fear, for this was simply Paul, though older, perhaps thinner, if it were possible. There was the same pallor, the same motionless features, the same singular sense of height, with the peculiar stoop of the figure, the same knitted forehead over-arching the same grey eyes. But one thing was changed. There was no wearied patience in his bearing, no sombre, brooding resignation in his glance.

And what he said was :—

Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are the meek : for they shall possess the land.

Blessed are they that mourn : for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice : for they shall have their fill.

Blessed are the merciful : for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart : for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers : for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake : for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

For the rest, it was very simple, very short, but I understood him. The sermon was the picture of a soul—it was the story of Marcelle. It was the story of one, by nature pure, by grace made meek—of one by nature merciful, by grace made poor in spirit. Finally of one who, having mourned was now comforted, who, having hungered after justice now

had her fill : who, having suffered unkindness and injustice for Christ's sake from her nearest and dearest, now rejoiced in the very great reward of heaven. It was all said as of any Christian soul, of the story of any soul made perfect. It was told as in a trumpet note of triumph. It was told as a great bit of good news, as of something that belonged to all, and yet was his own secret. I read the secret, and, putting my hand for a moment on George's, I knew that he too had read it. But we both would go away, that Paul might not know that we had been there. Surely this secret was his own. Only Marcelle perhaps would know that the first fruits of Paul's preaching was the winning for God of a poor nature, the end of a long fight.

Long ago he had roused me to the highest then seen by him, and I had tried to follow. Now, something far stronger than myself had hold of me, something infinitely greater than Paul. Now, when he pointed, as in my dream of long ago, to a city in the sky, a veil seemed to fall from my eyes. I could see Marcelle, who having learnt the new knowledge was waiting for us three in perfect joy to sing the *Gaudeamus* of the Angels together, but I could look onward deeper and higher and further yet, until my eyes were blinded with excess of light, and my heart grew faint with sweetness, and my whole soul, satisfied, could but murmur the one true thing given me to say :—

“Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to Thy great mercy.

“And according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my iniquity.”

STATEMENT BY THE COMTE D'ETRANGES.

SANTA SABINA, ROME.

To any friends and once fellow-workers who have not forgotten me, or any brothers in the Christian faith who, knowing a little of my story, have given me the great gift of their prayers, I wish to write a few words. I do not wish to recall myself to those who no longer think of me; there is no need. Nor would I now challenge those who doubt of me in any way. I have been too much to blame in the past; it is not for me to look now for undoubting sympathy from many even of my fellow-Catholics. Nor, should there be a few in the intellectual world who remember me as I was and who doubt my present intellectual sincerity, would I attempt now to argue with them or to explain my life and my motives. My life I trust is hid with Christ in God. If from the depths of my present resting-place, I am one day to come out again among men, it may become my duty to do so, but that time is not yet. And even although I wish to speak a little to a few intimate friends in different countries who were once bound to me by our common interests, I do so with many hesitations. I know well that any self-analysis must fail. I do not pretend to know myself more than very partially; I can only say what is here and now plain to me. Then, how is it possible to speak, in a few words and under stress of past suffering and present emotion, of the great con-

troversies in which I and my friends have been concerned? The conditions of human knowledge, the ethics of conformity, the philosophy of dogma will not be touched on here. I speak as one less wise. I give only in crudest simplicity the headings on the milestones of the road I have passed along. As I said just now, some day I may do more. Now, may any of you reading these crude and hasty words, take the facts they relate, and viewing them in your own way, assimilate them to the wider and more subtle philosophy in which we at one time laboured together.

You know that as a child I was a Catholic, that as a young man I lost my faith, and my spiritual life was darkened. All my pleasures were intellectual. I had no temptation to what is called a life of pleasure. My development was one-sided and abnormal. I had none of the hopes, fears, joys or sorrows of the heart that I have witnessed in other men. In my intellectual life I was absolutely candid. Some day I may trace out clearly the path of thought that led me to accept the Catholic Church as an intellectual conclusion. It was the happiest time of my life, when the great notion of Christianity grew in its new light before my astonished eyes. In my mind that notion took a deep root. But I remember no consequent trouble in the region of the soul, the rest of my nature, that was not pure intellect, hardly turned in its sleep.

Although I spoke of the Church as the great spiritual regenerating force for mankind, it was as a force in the region of the intellect, the region of truth, rather than the region of life. It was the huge untruth of materialism, the fearful lie of pessimism from which the Church was to save mankind. Of suffering I had some faint idea, of sin I had none.

I pass at once over the history of my life as a propagation

of my ideas, but that propagation itself developed a more human side, however evil. Love of power, a certain love of sympathy, the instincts of a leader took me out of the atmosphere of purely abstract thought. To my own surprise, when thwarted, these human elements showed a fearful and torturing vitality. I could hardly believe that I was the same man, so entirely was I changed by disappointment.

That great, that overwhelming disappointment was the Catholic Church. I had made an ideal of my own, a Church of the intellect, and as it was a creation of my own imagination, I expected to mould it at my will. I came to the Bride of Christ as a teacher—I was to be her professor in philosophy and criticism. I came to give advice to the experience of eighteen centuries. I remember comparing the work I had to do in Rome to Newman's work in Oxford. Then my views were rejected, and in my passion I deceived myself into the notion that I was cast out.

I need hardly tell the few for whom this is written that I misjudged the situation, how wilfully I cannot say.

As a matter of fact, it was I who rejected the Church, not the Church that rejected me.

I had denied no dogma of faith. I had brought before the authorities a theory which adapted theology to certain results of modern thought, and had asked them to accept those results finally, as proved conclusions. The authorities refused to accept my theory. But that theory I had offered for their judgment as formulated by those who desired my condemnation. And, moreover, as you all know, the decision could not be described as "an infallible pronouncement of the Pope when as teacher and father of all Christians he defines a doctrine as to faith and morals to be held by the whole Church".

I had not the least wish to continue in the bond of unity. I did not care to know or analyse to the bottom exactly what

was involved in the action of Rome. I did not ask what interpretation I might lawfully put upon its actions. I wished to know no more, to think no more of the Church of the ages. She had proved herself quite different from what I had anticipated. My ideal had vanished like a dream, or a tent that is struck in the night.

For me, if the Church did not exist, my Christianity did not exist, and my Theism was of no account. The whole intellectual structure of my religion had been based on Catholicism as the religious expression of the human race. I am not now at pains to defend my philosophy, I am merely stating facts.

For a time my life was entirely deranged. The time from my leaving Rome to my convalescence after a dangerous illness in America, is simply a nightmare. My illness made a break with the immediate past. I stifled memory; the old habits that had become a second nature reasserted themselves. I plunged in thought again. It was my curse that I had allowed my thinking powers to absorb the energies, and starve the resources of the rest of my nature. For years I lived almost alone in the East; its languages, its mysterious histories, its philosophies absorbed my consciousness.

But all the while, oh my God, "Thou hast known my sitting down and my rising up. Thou hast understood my thoughts afar off: my path and my line hast Thou searched out." The arms of His Omnipotence were supporting the maimed and impotent creature who thought himself self-sufficient.

All the while the Divine patience waited on my pride for love of the humility of a soul that loved me. No angel could catch a whisper of prayer from my dumbness, but daily her intercession for me went up to heaven. No man

or woman was the better for my existence : but when the poor and the suffering blessed her, she returned those blessings as dew on my parched nature. I had wilfully extinguished the lamps on the altars that had burned on my forefathers' lands for many generations ; she spent her whole substance in sustaining them. In all those chapels the Great Sacrifice of the New Covenant was daily offered for me.

How tremendous are the mysteries of the spiritual world ! For " His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways ". In her death was to be my salvation. It seemed impossible, humanly speaking, that the dry bones of my nature could ever live again. It is said that the agony of the return to consciousness for one just saved from drowning is terrible. What is it compared to the agony of a heart that awakes to love just too late ? and this, when loss is a revelation of what is lost ? when the man knows " I love " for the first time, then " I have lost what I love," and lastly turns on himself with the awful accusation : " It was you whose cruelty darkened and perhaps shortened the life of the one human being who truly loved you ? To her past life there is no human reparation."

If I had but known it, the agony was proof of vitality. Through that torture I was to pass into a new heaven and a new earth.

I could not give back to Marcelle the youth that I had devoured. I could not break into those years of poverty and suffering. I could not whisper into her dying ear that all had not been in vain. But I knelt down as the morning broke over the mountain tops, and I consecrated myself to do what I could to fulfil every wish she had ever breathed for me.

How can you love God whom you do not see, if you love not man whom you do see ? He brought me back to Himself

by a human way, by love of one whom I could no longer see on this earth. The yearning to see her once more was the seed whence was to grow the yearning for the beatific vision.

It all came to me slowly, and in order. I went back to her grave, to live in her house, to do there all she would have had me do. During those weeks I saw no further ahead than the practical work I had in hand. Then I knew what must come next. "Thy word was a lamp unto my feet," not to see a general view, only to see the next step in the way. I went to Rome, took a quiet lodging, and spent some weeks in prayer and meditation. Not at once, but gradually, the best thoughts of my early manhood resumed their dominion. There, in the depths of my consciousness my old ideal of the Church of Christ was waiting for me. Like a great landscape it was awaiting the light; the majesty of the mountains and the fulness of the rivers, the richness of the harvests, the forms of tree and fern and flower, waiting to be revealed in the sunshine. Lo! the image on the mind,—the one gift I had used candidly,—was there under the rust and the dirt. There was the one connected, coherent history of the human race, there was the treasury in which the spirit of man had amassed its wealth from the beginning of the ages; there were prophets foretelling, and saints fulfilling, martyrs dying and fathers meditating, there was the life of the cloister and of the home, all in organised unity, in endless vitality and growth, ever changing, in order to remain the same.

But the sun of love had risen on the landscape. I now saw it no longer merely in the highest vision of the most candid intellect; it was no longer an abstraction. All was there, but the proportions were different—some of what had been the main features were now seen as very incidental, while the greatest beauties had been almost overlooked.

In the end, I knelt once more at the feet of the Father of Christendom—in the same room in the Vatican where I had knelt in scorn and mockery fifteen years before. I had wilfully misread his silence. I had scorned his kindness. I would not incline my ear to take his meaning. He remembered all. “She committed her way unto the Lord,” he said, “and He has brought it to pass.”

Of the intellectual problems which so absorbed me, and in which the immediate adoption of my own solutions once seemed so absolutely imperative, I do not feel, as I have already said, that the time has yet come for me to speak again in detail. That I had true thoughts in my mind I do not doubt. Whether the decision of the Holy Office really condemned those thoughts, or, as Sutcliffe used to say, only rejected a particular way of realising the changes I desired in sciences which have their own technical rules, I will not now inquire. But one virtue was in me wholly wanting, which belongs alike to a great intellect and a great character,—namely, the patience which can submit and wait, without being untrue to one’s best self or one’s deepest convictions. Let those who would understand my meaning read the following words, written by one to whom wisdom meant so much, who feared the loss of the ancient truths which authority protects, as much as he desired the admission into Christian thought of those new points of view which are true:—

“There is a time for everything, and many a man desires a reformation of an abuse, or the fuller development of a doctrine, or the adoption of a particular policy, but forgets to ask himself whether the right time for it has come; and, knowing that there is no one who will be doing anything towards its accomplishment in his own lifetime unless he does it himself, he will not listen to the voice of authority, and he spoils a good work in his own century, in order that

another man, as yet unborn, may not have the opportunity of bringing it happily to perfection in the next. He may seem to the world to be nothing else than a bold champion for the truth and a martyr to free opinion, when he is just one of those persons whom the competent authority ought to silence; and, though the case may not fall within that subject-matter in which that authority is infallible, or the formal conditions of the exercise of that gift may be wanting, it is clearly the duty of authority to act vigorously in the case. Yet its acts will go down to posterity as an instance of a tyrannical interference with private judgment, and of the silencing of a reformer, and of a base love of corruption or error; and it will show still less to advantage, if the ruling power happens in its proceedings to evince any defect of prudence or consideration. And all those who take the part of that ruling authority will be considered as time-servers [alas for my misjudgment of Sutcliffe!] or indifferent to the cause of uprightness and truth; while, on the other hand, the said authority may be accidentally supported by a violent ultra party [Markham et hoc genus omne] which exalts opinions into dogmas, and has it principally at heart to destroy every school of thought but its own" (Newman's *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, p. 259).

One word more about my present self. I have been asked why I chose the Dominicans. I was attracted to them by the history of Lacordaire. It seemed to me that Lamennais and Lacordaire were typical, the one of my past, the other of what I fain would make my future, however faintly, resemble. Lacordaire, bleeding with many wounds of the affections, sad with isolation, and restless with the longing to work for souls that is too often misunderstood, sought the sheltering care, the stimulus, the family affection and the brotherhood in Christ, of one of the great religious orders.

I went to Santa Sabina and at once I felt at home. I am writing now in view of that orange tree seven hundred years old which put forth a new and vigorous shoot in the year that Lacordaire came into those cloisters. "Thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's."

And now, should there be any living whom I have knowingly or unknowingly injured in the past, I humbly beg their prayers that the offering of the few years that remain to me, in reparation of that wrong, may win for them all blessings in this life and in the next.

If He but guide us, we shall want for nothing in the place of pasture where he has put us, until He bring us to meet together in the happy pastures of eternal life.



